DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

HYDERABAD | MONDAY | 31 AUGUST 2020

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Vol. 83 No. 242 Established 1938 | 20 PAGES | ₹6.00

WEATHER

Max: 32.6°C
Min: 22.8°C
RH: 61%
Rainfall: 0.3 mm
Forecast: Cloudy sky. Rain likely. Max/Min temp. 33/23ºC

COVID-19 COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+78,487)	(+906)
36,13,922	64,547

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+2,924)	(+10)
TS: 1,23,090	818
(+10,603)	(+88)
AP: 4,24,767	3,884

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

2,52,91,896

DEATHS

8,48,553

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES 213

worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari; Dakshinayana
Tithi: Bhadrapada Shuddha Trayodasi till 8.49 am
Star: Shravanam till 3.05 pm
Varjyam: 7.21 pm to 9.03 pm
Durmuhurtam: 12.41 pm to 1.30 pm; 3.09 pm to 3.59 pm
Rahukalam: 7.30 am to 9 am

HIJRI CALENDAR
Muharram 11, 1442 AH

PRAYERS
Fajar: 5.00 am
Zohar: 12.26 pm
Asar: 4.38 pm
Maghrib: 6.36 pm
Isha: 7.45 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.30 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.02 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 5.30 PM
MOONSET TOMORROW 4.11 AM

COUNTER POINT

IN BRIEF

Chhattisgarh CM in self-isolation

Raipur: Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel on Sunday said he will isolate himself for the next four days as two of his staff members, including a personal security officer, have tested positive for coronavirus. He said his test report came negative. "My Officer on Special Duty and Personal Security Officer have found corona positive. My (test) report is negative at the moment, but I will be in isolation for the next four days as a precautionary measure." — *PTI*

CENSUS, NPR EXERCISES MAY GET POSTPONED

New Delhi, Aug. 30: The first phase of the Census and the exercise to update the National Population Register (NPR), scheduled for this year but deferred due to the Coronavirus outbreak, may be delayed by a year as there is no sign of slowdown of the pandemic.

The Indian census is one of the largest administrative and statistical exercises in the world, with the involvement of more than 30 lakh officials who would visit each household across the length and breadth of the country.

"Census is not an essential exercise. Even if it is delayed by a year, there would be no harm," a senior official said.

The official said no final decision has been taken on when the first phase of the Census 2021 and NPR update would take place, but it is almost certain that it would not be held in 2020 due to the rising cases of the coronavirus.

The house-listing phase of the Census and the exercise to update NPR were scheduled to be carried out across the country from April 1 to September 30, 2020, but were postponed due to the Covid-19 outbreak.

"As the entire exercise needs the involvement of lakhs of officials and visit to each family, we can't undermine the health risk involved in it," he said. — *PTI*

LADAKH CLASH: NAVY DEPLOYED WARSHIP IN SCS

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG. 30

Indian Navy reportedly deployed one of its frontline warships in the South China Sea much to the displeasure of the Chinese who raised objections over the move during diplomatic talks between the two countries.

The warship was reported to have been deployed in the South China sea after the June 15 clash with the Chinese soldiers in the Galwan Valley.

China objected to the presence of Indian Navy in the South China Sea where the PLA Navy has been trying to consolidate its position. The US Navy has been conducting exercises in the SCS sea to challenge the dominance which Chinese Navy is trying to establish in the region.

■ Full report on Page 7

Mourners ignore Covid

Thousands of people participate in the Bibi ka Alam procession in Old City in Hyderabad on Sunday. The mourners ignored Covid-19 protocols and police orders not to have a procession. ■ Report on Page 5 — *P.SURENDRA*

3 militants, cop killed in Srinagar firefight

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC
SRINAGAR, AUG. 30

Three militants and a counter-insurgency specialist of the Jammu and Kashmir police were killed in an encounter in Srinagar's Panthachowk area overnight, the officials said here on Sunday.

This was the third such clash between the separatist militants and security forces in the Valley since Friday evening. Seven militants — four belonging to Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT) and three to Hizb-ul-Mujahideen — and an Army jawan were killed earlier in two separate gunfights in southern Shopian and Pulwama districts, respectively.

Director General of Police Dilbag Singh said that J&K police lost one of its counter-insurgency experts in the killing of assistant sub-inspector Babu Singh in the encounter that took place in Panthachowk's Dhobi Mohalla after three bike-borne militants made a failed attempt to attack a joint naka party of the police and CRPF and snatch the service weapon of one of security personnel at around 10 pm on Saturday.

He said that after the attack was foiled by alert security personnel, the trio — one of them, as per reports, equipped with an AK assault rifle — abandoned their motorbike on the road and then ran into a nearby residential area which was encircled by reinforcements including those from the Army's 20 Rashtriya Rifles.

One militant was also killed on Saturday night itself. The other two were "neutralised" by security forces on Sunday.

The militants were identified as Saqib Bashir Khanday, Umar Tariq Bhat and Zubair Ahmed Sheikh, residents of nearby Drangbal, Pampore and, according to the police, affiliated with the proscribed terrorist organisation LeT.

Armyman killed in sniper attack

DC CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR, AUG. 30

A Junior Commissioned Officer (JCO) of the Army was killed possibly in a sniper attack from across the Line of Control (LoC) in Nowshera sector of Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district on Sunday.

Army sources identified the slain Naib Subedar as Rajvinder Singh of 1 Sikh Regiment. The sources said that though the exact cause of the fatality is not known, it could be a sniper attack, a ceasefire violation or a sneak attack by infiltrators. "There could be some other reason behind this killing. We are investigating and trying to ascertain how actually he was killed," the sources said.

An earlier report had said that the facing armies traded small arms fire in Kalsiyan and Jhangar of Nowshera sector after suspicious movement was observed by the Indian Army near the fence early Sunday.

The Indian and Pakistani armies and border guards often clash along the LoC and also International Border (IB) in J&K.

State over-reported asymptomatic nos

TS had claimed 90%, now says it's 69%

BALU PULIPAKA | DC
HYDERABAD, AUG. 30

The state government on Sunday, for the first time, acknowledged that its much-touted claim that asymptomatic cases of Covid-19 — in which people do not require any medical care — dominate the disease in the state have been wrong all along.

Information provided by the health department on Sunday showed that the government either grossly underestimated, or adopted a fictitious narrative, with respect to informing people on the true extent and impact of Covid-19.

In the Covid-19 bulletin issued on Sunday, the state health department inserted a new, but brief, table providing details of the number of asymptomatic and symptomatic Covid-19 cases.

Titled 'Status of symptomatic/asymptomatic', the health department said that of the total 1,23,090 Covid-19 cases so far, 84,932 were asymptomatic which works out of 69 per cent. The balance 38,158 cases, accounting for 31 per cent, have been symptomatic, the bulletin revealed.

The government's stand till Sunday was that up to 90 per cent of all Covid-19 infected people remained asymptomatic in the state and that they would not even be aware that they have caught the disease.

Of the remaining 10 per cent, the government's stand was that half of them would have mild to moderate symptoms and could be treated without too many complications. It was the balance five per cent of the entire cases who might require intensive care and specialised treatment, the state government has been saying for months now.

Incidentally, Sunday's bulletin for the 24-hour period between 8 pm on Friday and 8 pm on Saturday, also included, for the first time, details of tests done on primary and secondary contacts of people found to be Covid-19 positive.

The health department said that in this 24-hour period, a total of 61,148 tests were conducted and of these, 27,516 were on primary contacts of Covid-19 positive persons while 8,560 tests were performed on their secondary contacts. A further 27,072 tests were on other individuals.

IMA writes to PM on doctors' safety

HARLEEN MINOCHA | DC
HYDERABAD, AUG 30

- **IMA SAID** those who died in the line of duty should be treated at par with those who give up their lives at the border fighting for the country.
- **IT SAID** their children should be treated as those of martyrs from the armed forces.

In the wake of the number of Coronavirus cases continuing to rise sharply and the subsequent load on the medical staffers, the Indian Medical Association (IMA) has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi raising significant demands for the community on Sunday.

The IMA said that according to the Centre's statistics. 87,000 health care workers have been infected and 573 have lost their lives due to Covid-19. Among the dead are 307deaths doctors.

Highlighting the rate of infection among doctors and medical staff and the growing fatality rate, the IMA said those who died in the line of duty should be treated at par with those who give up their lives at the border fighting for the country.

Their children should be treated as those of martyrs from the armed forces and their spouse or dependent should be provided a government job as per their qualifications, the IMA said. "The solatium that is in place has failed to reach the unfortunate beneficiaries due to the inadequacy of the chosen instrument and the indifference. The scheme is reported to have been lapsed as well, it said.

■ Page 5: IMA wants solatium for Covid-hit staff

Vizag's wooden toymaker to go electric after PM pat

V.K.L. GAYATRI | DC
VISAKHAPATNAM, AUG. 30

Etikoppaka toymaker C.V. Raju got a surprise when Prime Minister Narendra Modi mentioned his work during his *Mann ki Baat* on Sunday.

"I am very happy that the country has recognised an Indian artisan's work. Prime Minister Narendra Modi rightly spoke about our skills and quality of our products. If electronic and mechanical devices are added to Etikoppaka toys, no country can beat India in toy making in future," Raju told *Deccan Chronicle* on Sunday evening.

C.V. Raju

A pioneer, Raju had two decades ago started painting the Etikoppaka toys in various colours, which added to their attraction. He now plans to make the toys electric.

Raju said he first came to know that the PM would mention his work when he got a call from Doordarshan. "It is a great honour that the Prime Minister mentioned my name," he said.

In his radio address, Mr Modi said India could become a big hub of toy production and that "it is the time to get vocal for local toys".

Hailing efforts by the toymaker and his Etikoppaka toys that were once popular, Mr Modi said, "the global toy industry is of more than seven lakh crore rupees, India's share is very little in this".

■ Page 2: Toymaker seeks to set up training centre
■ Another report on Pg 7

EGO | CLASH

CSK star was reportedly miffed at hotel room allotted to him

Raina returned after fight with Dhoni

C. SANTHOSH KUMAR | DC
CHENNAI, AUG. 30

A day after Chennai Super Kings announced Suresh Raina's surprise IPL pullout citing "personal reasons", it has emerged that all is not well in the M.S. Dhoni-led team. According to reports, Raina was "unhappy" from the day CSK landed in the UAE because some of his "unreasonable demands" were unmet.

Apparently, the hotel room he was allotted was "inadequate" for him and

Raina wanted a suite similar to the one Dhoni had been provided with.

"He definitely hasn't left the CSK camp on good terms. His demands were unreasonable," a team source told this newspaper.

With news of the alleged rift, the initial speculation that Raina was worried about the murder of a relative in Pathankot on August 20 — two days before CSK reached the UAE — may not be true.

N. Srinivasan, the man behind Super Kings, said on Sunday that cricketers, sometimes, "act like prima donnas". ".....like the temperamental actors of the olden days. Chennai Super Kings have always been like a family and all seniors players have learnt to co-exist," the CSK team owner was quoted as saying.

"My thinking is that if you are reluctant or not happy, go back. I don't force anyone to do anything... sometimes, success gets into your head," Srinivasan added.

Srinivasan said Dhoni was "not worried at all". "I spoke to MS (Dhoni) and he has assured me that even if the numbers go up, there was nothing to worry. He spoke to the players through a Zoom call and asked them to remain safe. "You really don't know who is a passive carrier," Srinivasan said.

India wins Chess Olympiad gold

MOSES KONDETY | DC
HYDERABAD, AUG. 30

Three players from Andhra Pradesh were part of the Indian team that was declared joint winners of the Chess Olympiad along with Russia after technical glitches led to a worldwide server crash in the second round of the final. The first round was drawn 3-3.

The online match ended 4.5-1.5 in favour of Russia after Nihal Sarin and Divya Deshmukh lost their Internet connection and forfeited on time, but the world chess governing body FIDE upheld India's appeal.

Koneru Humpy, Dronavalli Harika and Pentala Harikrishna were the Telugu players in the 14-member team that included Viswanathan Anand and comprised men, women and juniors. "This is the first time India has won the Olympiad so it's a special moment for us," a jubilant Humpy told this newspaper on Sunday.

■ Another story on Page 12

Swachh rank only on paper, not in civic sense

On the street

GHMC must clear hyacinth in Safilguda lake

Even though the government has sanctioned funds for removal of hyacinth in lakes under the jurisdiction of the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Authority, the Safilguda lake has been left unattended. Because of the growth of the weed, the lake has become a breeding place for mosquitoes. I am a senior citizen and I ask the GHMC officials to have mercy on me and direct the personnel concerned to remove the hyacinth and save the residents around Safilguda lake.

P. Satyanarayana
Balramnagar, Safilguda

Please preserve Osmansagar, Himayatsagar

The Osmansagar and Himayatsagar have received very little water during the current spell of rains due to encroachment of their inlet channels. This at a time when the gates of several projects were opened to release excess water. If the government does not take steps to revive them, Osmansagar and Himayatsagar will remain in name only. The government should preserve the lakes.

Syed Shamsuddin Maghrabi
Hyderabad

Commercial taxes dept, pay our salaries

In the commercial taxes department, we are 189 outsourced employees working as data entry operators. All of us are graduates and have been working since 2009. Since April, we have been not getting our salary of ₹15,000, which is very less compared to regular employees. We are poor and face many problems if we do not get the salary in time. We have to pay the house rent and meet our other expenses. I request the state government to pay us our salary in time every month.

Outsourced employees of the commercial taxes department

e-Panchayat site needs to give me my tax receipt

I had used the e-Panchayat website and paid my house tax using UPI (Ref: 02321077-6029) on August 19. The property is situated in Kollur, Shankarpally. The login through my mobile number was perfect till I paid the amount of ₹1,790 after which the details have disappeared and the website hung. I wrote a email regarding this but there has been no response. I am shocked by the laxity of the government departments and the disappearance of my money. I want the authorities to either refund the money to my bank account or send me a receipt immediately.

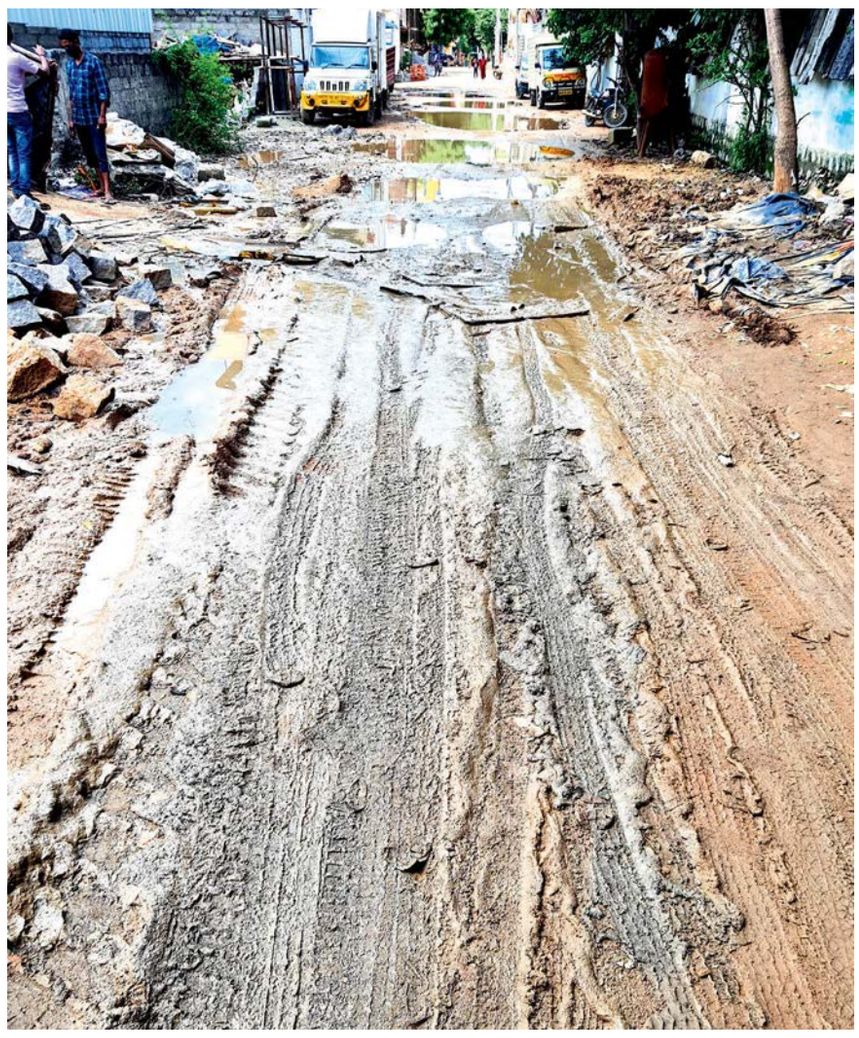
Krishna Mohan
Ph: 9676755966

Dilapidated bldg at Nampally poses big risk

Based on notices issued by the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) to the owners and shopkeepers (No. B/701/2012 dated January 31, 2014, under Section 47) for demolition on the 100-year-old dilapidated, structurally weak building, we 25 legal heirs vacated our portions and are living in rental flats for the past six years. But the GHMC has not dismantled the vulnerable building which is in shambles at the commercial hub of Nampally crossroad opposite Dargah Yusufain. Road widening at the spot is not possible due to the building, and the footpath has been encroached upon. We owners request the GHMC commissioner and the assistant commissioner of police to take precautionary measures in advance, vacate the occupants, cordon off the building and demolish it.

Erram Khan
Nampally

Bad road conditions



Overflowing sewage, damaged roads at Venkatadrinagar big pain for residents

We residents of Venkatadrinagar, Subhashnagar, Jeedimetla, are facing a lot of problems due to the very bad condition of roads and sewage overflowing on to the roads. A lot of accidents are happening because of potholes. Some of the potholes are so deep that we can't even walk there. I hope the officials will take note after publication of the complaint in Speak Out. The location is the road opp the Saibaba temple, near Foxsagar lake, Venkatadrinagar.

Irfan
Venkatadrinagar

RK Puram flyover must be recarpeted

Lots of potholes have developed on the RK Puram flyover due to incessant rains during the last few days. Because of this, iron rods of the flyover are protruding from the potholes which is a nightmare for commuters on this busy flyover which connecting ECIL to Trimulgherry and Secunderabad.

To avoid any breakdown of vehicles or accidents the authorities must recarpet the entire road immediately. I hope the authorities concerned look into this.

P. Muralidharan
Ananda Nilayam, Sree Colony, Neredmet

Trench caused by drain work turns into nala

It is almost nine months since the drainage lines running from Chennai Mall till Gumbad masjid were replaced, but the excavated trench has been left as it is. Due to the continuing rains, this trench has literally become a nala. This is causing hardships to pedestrians and motorists. Through Speak Out, we request officials to take action and get the work done.

Wajid Siddiqui
Ayodhyanagar, Mehdipatnam

Please construct speed breakers at Road No. 3, Income Tax Colony

Road No. 3, Income Tax Colony, between Hanuman temple and Snehpuri Ring Road sees thick traffic including heavy vehicles. During the lockdown, the roads were relaid at Ramakrishnapuram, Ring Road traffic signal, Alkapuri Sai Baba temple up to Road No. 1, Income Tax Colony. There was a speed breaker at first crossroad near Tirumala Residency but that has been levelled when the new road was laid. Because of this, vehicles are speeding on this busy road. I request officials to construct speed breakers, one at the old spot and another at More Super Market. Besides, several nearby roads were painted with borders and lane marking. The same has to done on the road from Snehpuri Ring Road via More Market to Hanuman temple junction.

Baru Rajendra Prasad
Income Tax Colony, Ramakrishnapuram

GHMC apathy towards dug-up road hits motorists at Motigalli

I would like to draw the attention of officials towards the pathetic state of the road at Motigalli, Chowmohalla Palace Road. The traffic police refers to it as a VIP road. Work on the drain system was completed almost 25 days back in front of Ruman Hotel but the GHMC yet to re-lay the road. Due to the bad condition of road and GHMC negligence, this road has become very dusty and accident-prone. Accidents have occurred with damage to vehicles and commuters have fallen from their two-wheelers. There is traffic chaos all the time. I request the GHMC and officials concerned to repair the road immediately.

Ali
Hyderabad

No parking facility at TSSPDCL, officials park cars on footpath

At Sultan Bazaar near the Clock Tower, the Telangana State Southern Power Distribution Company Limited (TSSPDCL) bill collection office, administration Office, fuse call office and Mee Seva are running from the same building.

Hundreds of visitors come to the building but there is no parking facility at all.

TSSPDCL staff park cars on the footpaths, making it difficult for pedestrians. However, the traffic police used to take photographs of visitors' vehicles parked on the road. The rest of the footpath is occupied by blanket and bedsheet sellers. I request officials to take proper action and solution.

Srinivas Netha
Rajmohalla, Hyderabad

Civic body must repair damaged road at Dollfine Durga County

I live in Dollfine Durga County Apartments, Madinaguda, beside GSM Mall. The approach road connecting to the main road has been damaged due to the incessant rains for many days. There are around 200 vehicles in our community using this approach road. We have raised a complaint with the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation and the local legislator about the issue many times but no action has been taken. I request Speak Out to publish our complaint so that the concerned team will take care of it.

Ravichandra K.
Madinaguda

Vinayaka Hills connecting road is littered with big potholes

I am a resident of Almasguda, Balapur mandal, Badangpet Municipal Corporation. Due to the heavy rains since the last 10 days, the connecting road in Vinayaka Hills near Arka International School that was laid five years ago is completely damaged. Big potholes have developed on the road. Ours is a low-lying area in Vinayaka Hills.

I request the officials to take action without further delay.

K. Deekshith Reddy
Vinayaka Hills

Pathetic condition of roads at Indus Bank Lane must be fixed

The roads are in a pathetic condition in Indus Bank Lane, Phase 1, Kamalapuri Colony Jubilee Hills. It is so bad that it is leading to accidents every other night. Two-wheeler riders and pedestrians have fallen down due to the bad condition of the road.

During the rain, waterlogging occurs on the road and mosquitoes breed on the stagnant water. I request officials to do the needful.

Banjara Star Cable Network
Hyderabad

Manhole menace

Request to HMWS&SB to replace manhole cover at Mansoorabad

The manhole cover located in Mansoorabad has to be replaced immediately. I have made many requests to the Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board but they have all gone in vain. Due to this inaction, silt and garbage are entering the drainage and blocking it. Moreover, it is dangerous to the residents, especially children playing around. The HMWS&SB must take immediate action and replace the manhole cover.

R.N. Nahak
Janapriya Enclave, behind Rock Town Colony, Mansoorabad

Manhole cover at Hassannagar is damaged, needs to be fixed

In my street in Hassannagar, Rajendranagar, the manhole cover is totally damaged. I have lodged several complaints with the GHMC department but no one has taken any action. I fear that this may become a health and physical safety hazard. I request Speak Out to highlight my problem so that officials take note.

Syed Shujath Ali
Hassannagar, Rajendranagar

Water enters houses as manholes overflow at Pensionpura, Houz

For a long time, the manholes are overflowing in Pensionpura, Lunger Houz. The dirty water is entering the houses which poses a serious threat to health. The dirty water is flowing from the Mohammadi graveyard. Despite repeated complaints to the officials of the municipal department and the cemetery, there is no response. We request the officials to take strict action as soon as possible so that no emergency health situation arises here.

Dastagir Nawaz
Pensionpura, Lunger Houz

Dear Readers, We at Deccan Chronicle request you to kindly send all your complaints, issues, grievances, feedback and suggestions to our government and all its departments by writing to Speak Out, the voice of the people, to our email ID **DCSpeakOut@gmail.com**

— Editor

RESPONSE

Thanks *DC*, TSSPDCL resolved issue

Thank you, *Deccan Chronicle*. The Telangana State Southern Power Distribution Company Limited (TSSPDCL) finally gave us the estimation for the bunch cable after publication of our complaint in Speak Out (*After 3 months, TSSPDCL doesn't give cost estimate, Aug. 24*).

Farheen Begum
Jubilee Hills

Drinking water problem solved, Thanks *DC*

The problem with the supply of drinking water at Barkatpura Masjid lane opposite Telangana Yuvathi Mandali function hall, which was highlighted in Speak Out, was resolved by the Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWS&SB) (*Since 21 days, Barkatpura residents struggle without drinking water, Aug. 24*). I would like to thank *Deccan Chronicle* and HMWS&SB deputy general manager Sanyasi Rao for solving the problem.

T. Kailash Ditya
Barkatpura

SCR acted on my complaint, thanks *DC*

I am extremely happy and satisfied with the immediate response of the South Central Railway authorities to verify records in the database confirming that the ticket worth ₹2,470 was reflected as cancelled. I convey my thanks to the SCR team.

G. Ravi Kumar

Drain repair at DV Colony finally done

I am extremely grateful to Speak Out. It was because of the publication of my complaint that the government took necessary steps to solve our problem (*Road not fixed after drain repair at DV Colony, Aug. 10*).

Hetal Rachh
DV Colony

Garbage pile up

Lift garbage on a regular basis at Tilaknagar

I am writing this to bring to the attention of the civic authorities that the person responsible to pick up garbage is not regular in my area. Earlier he was picking up the garbage on alternate days but for the past few months he is coming once every three days. My repeated advice to him to come at least once in 2 days has failed to elicit the desired response. Probably because of this reason I have seen some of the residents disposing garbage on the road. I therefore request the civic authorities to have a mechanism to monitor that the garbage pick-up is done regularly.

Thakur Shailender Singh, *Tilaknagar*

2 vacant plots at Malakpet have become home to rodents, garbage

There are two vacant properties, exactly opposite my residence in the lane opposite Dilkush Function Hall at Dayanandnagar, Malakpet, which have been left unattended for the last three to four years. No cleaning has been done by the owners, leading to bad smell emanating from the plots. Dogs, cats, rats, insects, mosquitoes, lizards and snakes are taking shelter in the vacant plots.

A giant rat recently entered our house from the plots. The entire plots are covered with trees and plants, making them look almost like a jungle in the residential colony. A few people throw their garbage into these plots, thus making the area unhygienic. There have been instances that few strangers have been entering the plots through boundary walls and smoking and drinking in the area.

I request the GHMC Hyderabad department to kindly inspect both the premises and arrange to clear the trees, clean/sanitise the area, demolish the dilapidated structures, and instruct the owner to regularly maintain the hygienic conditions in their vacant premises. We have already lodged the complaint vide reference mentioned above but there has been no action taken yet.

M. Vishal Kumar
Dayanandnagar, Malakpet

SCB woes

SCB has not to swept Madhupala for 60 days

Madhupala Enclave Colony of War No. 6 of Secunderabad Cantonment, the roads have not been swept for two months. The residents of the area are up to date with their property and water taxes.

Repeated requests to the Secunderabad Cantonment Board authorities have not resulted in any action. In these pandemic times, there is a need for daily cleaning of roads.

V.S. Ravinder Reddy
Madhupala Enclave

SCB contractors sweep main roads, ignore lanes

The Secunderabad Cantonment Board gives the job of roadside cleaning on contract. The SCB changed the team on May 31. From June 1, the new team of roadside sweepers has come only twice. That is twice in almost three months. When asked, they say that they have been told to clean only the main roads. Thus, the inner colony houses, from whom SCB collects taxes even during the pandemic and who often pay advance tax, are left with littered roads.

Veneysha kumar
Janakpuri Secunderabad

Where streets have no lights, bins stink

Grievances

Bharti Axa is least bothered to solve my issue

I have received a quotation from Bharti Axa towards renewal of my car Insurance. It mentions as ₹6.5 lakh the IDV of the car. After paying the premium of ₹17,752 on July 18, and regular follow up, Bharat Axa took four days to issue the policy. The IDV has been reduced to ₹5,99,970 in the policy document. When I checked back, I was advised to drop an email to their customer services. It has been more than one month after I did that, but there is no proper response from Bharti Axa Customer Care. They are ignoring my mails. It seems Bharti Axa is least bothered now once the premium is received.

M. Srinivas
Secunderabad

Request Water Board to settle bill for all times

I have been getting messages from the billing department of the Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board offering me a one-time settlement in order to clear my dues.

Last year, I was offered the same by the then director, revenue, and I paid ₹30,000 and completed the formalities. Since the last 15 days I have started getting messages offering me the same deal. I request the HMWS&SB to give me an appointment to discuss and resolve the issue which is hanging since last 10 years.

B. Govind Rao
Ph: 9704145811

Bolaram postal dept, kindly deliver my letters

Two important letters posted to me more than a month ago by the Provident Commissioner, Karimnagar, in respect of transfer of my Pension Payment Order to Hyderabad and another letter from Mahasahasravadhani Dr Garikipati Narasimha Rao from Sainikpuri, Hyderabad, have not reached me till date.

I am in touch with the Bolaram postman who cuts a sorry figure whenever I enquire about the letters. I request the postal department to deliver the letters rightaway.

N.S.R. Murthy
Doveton, Macha Bolaram

Electricity issues

Broken branch dangles dangerously on live wires at Masab Tank

We residents of Masab Tank would like to inform the authorities through Speak Out that a branch from a tree broke and fell on the wires and transformer three weeks near My Home Apartment opposite Goodwill Hospital beside the Police Officers mess. Despite complaints, no action has been taken either by the GHMC nor by the electricity department. We request the department concerned to take action before some untoward incident occurs.

Residents
Masab Tank, Hyderabad

TSSPDCL should check meter on a fixed day to avoid burden

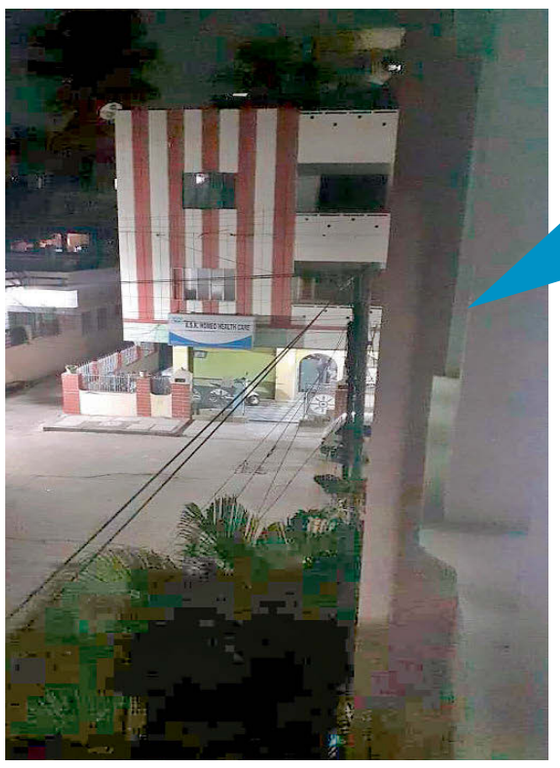
I feel that the meter readers must take the readings on a fixed day every month. A delay pushes the consumption to the next high higher slab, resulting in a higher bill for the customer. To overcome this and do justice, the Telangana Southern Power Distribution Company Limited (TSSPDCL) should deduct 20 to 30 units of consumption for every day's delay in meter reading.

Col V.P. Shrinivasan (Retd)
Asha Officers Colony, RK Puram

Tree branches shake power lines at Jeedimetla

This is regarding a tree at Jeedimetla village, behind the Gandhi statue. The branches are lying on the electrical wires for the last 10 days. I am calling the officials daily there is neither any response nor any action taken. I request the electricity department and the GHMC to look into the matter and take action early.

Gunnala Srinivas Rao
Jeedimetla, Suchitra Junction



Streetlights trouble

Streetlights are not working at Vidyanagar station, poses risk

Streetlights are not working over several days near Vidyanagar railway station. This is causing inconvenience to us. The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation may please look into this matter. Perhaps the authorities will take action after seeing this complaint in Speak Out.

Shesh Srivastava
Vidyanagar

Streetlights are switched on earlier in the day at Safilguda

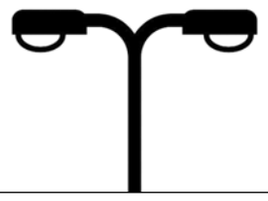
The streetlights are switched on early as 5.15 pm in Uttamnagar, Safilguda, even now when it is still bright outside. I request the officials to switch on the lights at a later hour so that electricity is saved.

Murthy K.S.R.
Safilguda

Streetlights at PS Nagar not functioning

I am a resident of PS Nagar Colony. The streetlights in this colony are not working since three weeks. Women and children are finding it very difficult to go out at night due to the darkness on the roads. I request the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation to kindly fix the streetlights.

M.A. Wahab
PS Nagar Colony



Sewage water mixes with borewell water at Anandnagar, Malakpet

I would like to highlight a serious issue. Due to the incessant rains for the past one week, there has been an overflow of sewage near our building (H.No. 16-2-721/4, Anandnagar, Malakpet) which has mixed up with the municipal water and borewell water supply of our building. This happens whenever there is heavy rainfall. The authorities concerned never take quick and prompt action to clean up the sewage and let it remain for weeks.

All of us are already fighting the pandemic. The water supply is an additional health hazard. We are an elderly couple and we have tenants of all age groups.

We demand immediate solution for this issue. Who will take responsibility if we fall sick due to a waterborne disease?

Mrs M.A. Basith
Malakpet

Dargah lane is a hub for drunkards

I would like to bring to the notice of the authorities that I come from the Siddi Pasha dargah lane at Jangammet under Chatrinaka police station limits every day. Late in the evening, after 8 pm till 11 pm, some autorickshaw drivers and other elements gather there and drink liquor, which is creating problems for the locality people. They also sit in the autorickshaws and watching their mobilephones. Several women and girls use the road and are scared by this. I request the authorities to initiate action at the earliest and post a police picket.

Sarfaraz Khan
Chatrinaka

Insufficient water supply at SPR Hills

The water supply to SPR Hills, T. Anjaiah Nagar, Borabanda, is not sufficient. Besides, water is supplied at low pressure.

We are given many complaints to the Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board. All that they do is send SMSs that the problem has been resolved.

Nothing has been done till date.

I request the HMWS&SB to please supply sufficient quantity of water to our area and ensure that the pressure is good.

Farheen Begum
Jubilee Hills

Nimboliadda bus stand has no proper shelter, adjacent bins stinks

After a complaint in Speak Out on August 3 (*Despite repeated plaints bus stop at Nimboliadda is not repaired*), the authorities removed the tin shed roofing of the Nimboliadda bus stand which had fallen down. No proper shelter as been provided to passengers to take shelter from the rain during the monsoon.

The bad smell emanating continuously from the adjacent dust bins is an additional irritant to commuters waiting for buses.

I request the authorities concerned to renovate the bus stand at the earlier as has been done at other bus stands at several areas in the city.

Om Vishal Raj Om
Nimboliadda

Damaged side walls in Darul Shifa can pose problem in future

I visited the Aza Khane Zehra in Darul Shifa, which is a religious place for the Shia Muslim community.

Religious gatherings (majlis) take place throughout the year, specially in the month of Muharram.

The side walls are damaged by rain. This year no painting has been done. The Aza Khane Zehra is world famous shrine built by the seventh Nizam Mir Osman Ali Khan. I would like to ask the persons concerned why the side walls are not being repaired? If it is not done immediately, there could be a major problem in the future.

Ehsan Raza
Hyderabad

SHORT TAKES

TWO YSR CONG LEADERS TEST COVID POSITIVE

MD ILYAS I DC
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 30

YSR Congress MP Y.S. Avinash Reddy and party Kothapeta MLA Ch. Jaggi Reddy tested Covid-19 positive and went into home isolation.

Avinash Reddy was being tested ahead of going to participate in the Dr Y.S. Rajasekhar Reddy birth anniversary celebrations along with Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy. Meanwhile, Andhra Pradesh witnessed over 10,000 Covid-19 cases for the fifth days running, recording 10,603 cases during the past 24 hours. The total caseload has increased to 4,24,767 of which 99,129 are active, 3,21,754 patients have recovered and 3,884 persons have died. The state has registered as many 88 deaths during the past 24 hours.

The highest number of 14 deaths were reported from Nellore district, followed by 12 in Chittoor, nine in Kadapa, seven each in Anantapur and West Godavari, six each in East Godavari and Srikakulam, five each in Krishna, Kurnool and Vizianagaram and four each in Guntur, Prakasam and Visakhapatnam districts.

- **THE TOTAL** caseload has increased to 4,24,767 of which 99,129 are active, 3,21,754 patients have recovered and 3,884 persons have died.

KTR announces Green Space Index

MADDY DEEKSHITH I DC
HYDERABAD, AUG. 30

Municipal administration and urban development minister K.T. Rama Rao initiated Green Space Index (UGI) for urban local bodies (ULBs). The government will hold a competition pertaining to municipalities and municipal corporations and would give rankings based on the spread of green cover.

The UGI is a measure of the total green space in a city or town. The urban and regional development plans, formulation and implementation guidelines (URDPFI) issued by the Union urban affairs recommends a minimum of 10-12 sq.km of open spaces (recreational, parks, forests) per person.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) mandates a minimum of 9 sq. km of green space and recommends 50 sq. km if possible. A means to measure urban green spaces is required to ascertain the overall quality of life in the city and also to monitor the progress of local bodies in increasing the greenery.

Rama Rao said GUI is the best method to measure greenery and monitoring tree plantation drives such as Haritha Haram by geotagging each tree and park by physically surveying the entire ULB, capturing photos or videos. However, he said, this method is time-consuming and expensive.

"Remote sensing techniques offer alternative ways to measure green spaces, albeit with slightly lesser accuracy, which will be enough to monitor total green area in a given city. Using 360 Degrees Street View Video, which gives insights into the size, proportion, distribution, and health of green space in urban areas along with remote sensing techniques can be the most accurate option, the minister said.

The UGI is endeavoured to achieve 60 per cent green cover for all 141 ULBs and its main objectives are to promote green cover by rankings and giving awards to ULB, quantitative measure of green space area by GIS, encourage aesthetic landscape, symmetry in plantation, promoting innovations in ULBs, to improve overall living and experiential quality of the city and an analysis on native trees or suitable trees for the city.

APPROACH:

- **DATA CAPTURING:** Combination of satellite images, 360° street view videos and photography.
- **GEO-TAGGING:** Geotagging of all trees.
- **CATEGORISATION:** The data captured will be classified into a number of categories.

Silent protest as SCR closes crucial gate

Residents of Vijaypuri Colony in South Lalaguda staged a silent protest maintaining social distancing against the closure of the only gate to enter South Lallaguda by the the South Central Railway. For the residents the gate is used to reach the police station, railway hospital, post office, workshop, railway school, Sacred Heart and CSI Churches and Shiridi Saibaba and Ganesh temples in a distance of a few hundred metres as all other entrances have been closed down by SCR. With the closure of the gate residents will now have to take a detour of about 5-km from Tarnaka and Mettuguda to reach these places. They requested the SCR to keep the gate open. — *GANDHI*

Parts of city to see 24-hr water shutdown

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, AUG. 30

The Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWS&SB) has said that there will be a 24-hour shutdown in water supply in certain areas of the city on Wednesday. The shutdown has been called to complete the junction work on the 1,400-mm diameter pipeline of the Krishna Drinking Water Supply Phase-II Ring Main-I from Mailardevpally to Tolichowki gravity main. This is being done to facilitate construction of the proposed downward ramp for the PVNR Expressway at Pillars No. 160 and 169,

The affected areas are:

O&M Div-III: Mehdipatnam, Karwan, Langer Houz, Kakatiyanagar, Humayannagar, Talabgadda, Asifnagar, MES, Shaikpet, OU Colony, Tolichowki, Mallepally, Vijaynagar Colony, Bhojagutta.

O&M Div-IV: Ziaguda, Red Hills, Secretariat, Old MLA Quarters, Allabanda.

O&M Div-V: Gagan Mahal, Himayatnagar.

O&M Div-XVI: Budvel, Hyderguda, Rajendranagar, Upperpally, Sulemannagar, MM Pahadi, Attapur, Chintalmet, Kishanbagh.

O&M Div-XVIII: Manikonda, Gandhamguda, Narsing, Kismathpur.

6 TEAMS LOOK FOR PRISONERS WHO FLED GH

BALU PULIPAKA I DC
HYDERABAD, AUG. 30

Three days after four prisoners, undergoing treatment for Covid-19 at Gandhi Hospital, escaped from the prison ward, the police who set up six special teams to trace them are yet to make any headway.

Convicts M. Somasunder, 20, and P. Narsaiah, 41, and undertrials Md Abdul Arbaz, 21, and Md Javed, 35, escaped on August 27 through a second floor window.

They were in civilian clothes. Most likely, they were wearing masks so it is difficult to identify them from CCTV footage, a police official said.

The police do have the ability to use facial recognition systems using CCTV footage, not all CCTV cameras capture images in the required quality. Only footage from some of the cameras, for instance at Secunderabad railway station and some government offices, can be used for the purpose, he said.

"We are monitoring call data of families and friends and checking on locations they used to frequent but we have drawn a blank," the official said.

IN BRIEF

Hyderabad airport gets energy award

Hyderabad: The GMR-led Hyderabad International Airport has won the 'national energy leader' and 'excellent energy efficient unit' awards at the 21st national awards for excellence in energy management. The event was organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Godrej Green Business Centre (GBC), during the 19th edition of the energy efficiency summit held between August 6 and 28. GHIAL has won the excellent energy efficient unit for the fourth year running and the national energy leader accolades for the second straight year.

OWAISI: NDA IGNORING JOB LOSS SITUATION

Hyderabad, Aug. 30: MIM president Asaduddin Owaisi has charged the NDA government with not showing enough concern to address job losses and other adverse effects brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic. He said 1.8 crore people all over the country were now not receiving salaries and eight crore daily wage labourers were out of work.

Ten crore school children who used to get mid-day meals have reportedly been deprived of it because of the lockdown, he said, addressing an online public meeting here on Saturday night.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had "invited" all this on the country by imposing an unplanned, unconstitutional lockdown, he alleged.

He alleged that there has been a 64 per cent dip in child immunisation and that 10 lakh children had not received their BCG vaccination during the lockdown. Besides, six lakh children had missed getting their oral polio vaccine since the Covid-19 outbreak, he said.

The Prime Minister, he alleged, was not worried about Chinese intrusions along the nation's borders.

Owaisi urged his supporters to help people during the pandemic, regardless of religion. He said his party would contest the coming Assembly polls in Bihar. The MIM had gained a toehold in Bihar in 2019, winning the minority Muslim dominated Kishanganj Assembly seat in a bypoll.

— *PTI*

TONSURE VICTIM ASSURED JOB, ₹1 LAKH

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, AUG. 30

Tourism minister M. Srinivasa Rao on Sunday announced ₹1 lakh compensation apart from a job to tonsure victim Srikanth. The minister visited the victim's house and inquired about details of the incident.

Speaking later, Srinivasa Rao said the government will not tolerate such incidents. He said that police had arrested all the accused in the incident. The accused mentally and physically tortured the victim and everyone should condemn such an incident, he remarked. The minister handed over a cheque of ₹50,000 extended to the victim by Pendurty MLA Adeep Raj. TD chief N. Chandrababu Naidu spoke to Srikanth on telephone and assured that Telugu Desam would extend all help to the victim. Left parties staged a protest at Ambedkar statue located in the city demanding that the state government order immediate arrest of cine producer Nutan Naidu too. Left party leaders alleged that Nutan Naidu was also involved in the crime.

Bandi-led BJP to 'expose' TRS

To take elections to GHMC, Warangal, Khammam bodies seriously

S.A. ISHAQUI I DC
HYDERABAD, AUG. 30

The BJP state executive, which met here on Sunday after Bandi Sanjay Kumar took charge as the president, resolved to take up agitations to expose the failures of the ruling TRS party.

It also decided to take the ensuing elections to the GHMC and Warangal and Khammam municipal corporations and the byelection to the Dubbaka Assembly segment seriously to emerge as the only alternative to the TRS.

Union minister of state for home G. Kishan Reddy said that despite support and suggestions from the Centre to control spread of Coronavirus and implementing welfare and development schemes, the state government was blaming the Centre to achieve political gains. He called upon party cadres to explain to the people the support extended by the Centre to the state and expose the failures of the TRS.

Addressing the office-bearers through video conference, Sanjay lashed out at Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao over the rise in Coronavirus cases and also ignoring the demand of teachers and employees to implement the Pay Revision Commission (PRC) recommendations.

He said the TRS had failed to protect the interests of the people while the Congress had been decimated. Only the BJP, which has a strong disciplined cadre, can form government. He appealed to the cadre to work for the party's victory in the forthcoming elections.

He said the government had given a free hand to Muslims to celebrate Id-ul-Fitr and Bakrid but was for permitting Ganesh immersions, it was trying to mislead people by stating that allowing the immersion procession would increase cases of Covid -19. The state BJP chief alleged that the TRS government had joined hands with corporate hospitals which are charging Coronavirus patients excessive amounts. The government has taken action only on two private hospitals but others were overcharging patients.

"We have an experienced leadership and a disciplined cadre. Several party workers lost their lives while serving Covid victims. Nine district heads were infected by the dreaded virus, but they served the people. This is the fundamental difference between the TRS and BJP, he said."

Demanding that the government officially celebrate Hyderabad Liberation Day on September 17, he called upon party cadre to unfurl the National Flag on the day across villages, towns and cities.

The state executive has resolved to take up various programmes from August 31 to September 30 on various issues including the Covid-19, crop loss to farmers due to floods, Hyderabad Liberation Day, exploitation of private schools and visiting of projects on Krishna River.

Congress MP and PCC president Uttam Kumar Reddy addresses a meeting on the year-long birth centenary celebrations of former prime minister P.V. Narasimha Rao with party leader Shashi Tharoor in attendance. — *P ANIL KUMAR*

Tharoor demands Ratna for PV

IREDDY SRINIVAS REDDY I DC
HYDERABAD, AUG. 30

Congress MP Shashi Tharoor demanded that former prime minister P.V. Narasimha Rao be conferred with the Bharat Ratna.

Participating in a webinar, 'Indian Foreign Policy and PV Narasimha Rao', under the auspices of Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) as part of the centenary celebrations of Narasimha Rao, Tharoor said there was a fundamental shift and uplift of India's fortunes, thanks to the dexterity with which he implemented revolutionary policies during his tenure. Tharoor stated that under Rao's leadership, India had managed global alliances while considering the impact of various domestic factors such as separatist movements as well as economic reforms on the foreign policy.

"A reformist at heart and one of the towering South Indians in Indian political history, Narasimha Rao embodied various qualities that truly made the country proud. His grasp of languages, skillful management of alliances and courage to introduce bold economic reforms with the then finance minister Dr Manmohan Singh fundamentally changed India," he said.

He said that the humble and but persuasive approach while managing affairs of the state throughout his long and distinguished career at various levels of government warrant the hallowed Bharat Ratna to be awarded to him posthumously. TPCC chief N. Uttam Kumar Reddy said the country transformed into a powerful nation during the tenure of Narasimha Rao.

State party affairs incharge Dr R.C. Khuntia, AICC secretaries Bosu Raju, Srinivas Krishnan, Celebration Committee chairperson Geetha Reddy, vice chairman D. Sridhar Babu and senior leaders V. Hanumantha Rao and others participated in the programme.

Kishan: Use tech to spread sop info

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, AUG 30

Union minister of state for home G. Kishan Reddy on Sunday stressed on the importance of using advanced technology to create awareness and attract the general public to welfare schemes of Centre

He was reviewing activities of media units of the ministry of information and broadcasting here in Hyderabad. He told officials that using creatives and infographics can easily attract the attention of the people and give comprehensive information on government schemes.

He said Hyderabad was a hub of many national institutes like NPA, NISA and NSG, Kishan Reddy suggested that special programmes on their activities be broadcast to create more awareness.

The minister released the September edition of *Yojana,* a magazine of the publication division. He also witnessed the demonstration on the digital media publicity van of the regional outreach bureau. DG (South) S.Venkateswar, deputy director, news, (AIR) attended the meeting.

Southwest moonsoon good all over Telangana, says IMD

T.S.S. SIDDHARTH | DC
HYDERABAD, AUG. 30

DISTRICTS	CUMULATIVE RAINFALL(MM) FROM 01/06/2020 TO 30/08/2020			
	Actual	Normal	Deviation(%)	Status
Warangal Urban	1,256.9	588.9	113	Large Excess
Siddipet	933.4	498.1	87	Large Excess
Jangaon	938.8	544.4	72	Large Excess
Medchal-Malkajgiri	560.8	466.1	20	Excess
Hyderabad	591.3	455.5	30	Excess
Rangareddy	574.2	383.4	50	Excess
Mahabubnagar	695.2	356.5	95	Large Excess
Jogulamba Gadwal	619	289.4	114	Large Excess
Wanaparthy	742.5	331.4	124	Large Excess
Mulugu	1660.2	915.7	81	Large Excess
Narayanpet	651.3	329.5	98	Large Excess
State Average	830.1	584.2	42	Excess

Rains over the state have been bountiful this year, say meteorologists. By the end of August, Telangana has received 42 per cent more rainfall than normal this year. As against a normal of 584.2 mm, the state has received 830.1 mm of rainfall.

Even better news is that 14 districts of the state have had large excess rainfall, 10 excess and nine normal. There is no district that has had deficient rainfall.

Weather scientists are attributing the monsoon to rise in number of weather systems over the state.

"This year, there have been consecutive weather systems that have brought rains all over the state. The month of August witnessed close to five systems that came in from Bay of Bengal and caused rains. We can now say that the south-west monsoon over the state has been good," B. Raja Rao, a meteorologist with Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) told Deccan Chronicle.

This is in stark contrast to the monsoon last year. In 2019, 23 districts received normal rain and only 10 districts received excess rainfall.

Officials say rains received last year were frugal compared to what the state witnessed this year.

Toymaker to set up training unit

FROM PAGE 1

"I have a proposal to start a knowledge transfer centre for training future generation artisans in making Etikoppaka toys. The government should come forward and help us in conserving this art," the now-famous toymaker stated.

The toys are made in Etikoppaka, a tiny village near Yelamanchili in Visakhapatnam district. Before the introduction of mechanical and electronic toys, Etikoppaka wood toys had wide recognition. After advanced toys, mostly from China, came into the market, Etikoppaka toys slowly lost ground. Earlier, over 500 families used to make these toys. Their number has now come down to 138 families.

The Etikoppaka toys are made of Ankudu karra (tree), which is soft. But this tiny scale toys' industry also suffered after Forest Department prevented toy makers from collecting Ankudu wood from forests. There are several families, which have been making these toys down since generations, including that of Pedapati Chinnayachari, who even received a national award from then President Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam. Chinnayachari's son P. Anandachari bagged two national awards, one of them presented by Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu.

Sharat, the latest generation toymaker from the Pedapati family, says the industry has suffered severely following the outbreak of Covid-19 and requires help.

TRADITION | HINDRANCE **Vedic scholars need to follow some traditions in daily life**

Girls hesitate to wed Brahmin priests

V.K.L. GAYATRI I DC
VISAKHAPATNAM, AUG. 30

Despite the offer of ₹75,000 assistance, Brahmin girls are unwilling to marry purohits and archakas.

The AP Brahmin Welfare Corporation (APBWC) is therefore rejigging its Kalyanamasthu scheme, which offers certain benefits in the fields of education, employment and conservation of Vedic culture.

With education and employment becoming a key part of life, most Brahmin girls are focussing on their career and are unwilling to marry purohits and archakas.

Following this, the APBWC introduced the Kalyanamasthu scheme under which it offered ₹75,000 to the bride if she married a Vedic scholar.

The scheme did not receive much response, with very few girls settled in rural areas expressing their willingness in marrying Vedic scholars.

THE APBWC introduced the Kalyanamasthu scheme under which it offered ₹75,000 to the bride if she married a Vedic scholar, but it did not get a good response

Vedic scholars have to follow certain traditions as part of their life as an archaka. As a result, girls are unwilling to marry them even if the boy earns a good amount of money. They instead prefer to get educated grooms with regular employment.

"There are several other customs including maintaining of social distance during the menstrual cycle and at certain other times. But girls nowadays are not willing to follow the same," said Poodipeddi Lakshmana Rao Sharma, a senior Vedic scholar."One cannot question the freedom of girls. But, we need to conserve our culture too. Instead of taking unilateral decisions, the Brahmin Welfare Corporation must convene meetings before deciding on various schemes, including Kalyanamasthu, and take the advice of all stakeholders," observed senior Vedic scholar Krishnaraya Deekshitulu.

MLA and AP Brahmin Welfare Corporation chairman Malladi Vishnu said they have decided to revamp the corporation's schemes, so that they serve the interests of beneficiaries in a realistic way.

IN LOVING MEMORY
on 24th Death Anniversary

Sri Appikatla Joseph
(Freedom Fighter) Ex-MP & Ex-MLC
Inserted by: Sons :
A. Bharat Bhushan
(MA, MBA, M.Phil, Retd. CCM, IRTS)
A. Subhas Chandra Bose (B.Tech)
Vice President, India Cements
Daughters-in-law:
K.H.Nalini (M.Sc., MBA), AGM, SBI, LHO, Koti, Hyd.
Smt. Sucharitha (M.Sc.)
Grand Children : A. Siddartha (USA), A. Sahith (USA), Sreyas (USA), Sharanya Bose (B.A).

SHRADHANJALI

Smt. BHARATHI SAXENA
DOB: 07.08.1949 DOD: 21.08.2020
13th Day ceremony today at our residence, H.No. 3-5-15, Ramkote, Hyd-500001.
From:
Prem Kumar Saxena & Family
8498945328, 9642994212
(B/2021/D00044)

OBITUARY
"I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever. Ps.:23:6

ETTA RODRIGUES
Retired Nursing Supdt.
Sarojini Devi Eye Hospital
W/o Gosu Dayanand
D.O.B. 24-12-1929 D.O.D.30-08-2020
Funeral on 31-08-2020 at 4.00 PM at No.12, Garrison Cemetery, Trimulgherry, Sec'bad.
Inserted by ... Family Members

IN LOVING MEMORY
on 24th Death Anniversary

Sri Appikatla Joseph
(Freedom Fighter) Ex-MP & Ex-MLC
Inserted by:
Sons : A. Vallabhai Patel (B.Tech)
General Manager DIC Guntur Dist
Daughters-in-law:
Smt. Anita (B.A.)
Grand Children :
Avinash Patel (B.Tech),
A.Vighna Patel (BE, IT),

MEMORIAL SERVICE
"Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God" *(Mathew 5:8)*

Late J.S. RATHNAM
Ex. BSNL Employee
DOB: 05.04.1950 DOD: 23.08.2020
Leaving your loving memories in everyone of us forever.
Memorial Service on 31.08.2020 at 1:30 PM at H.No. 9-4-86/81/142/G1, Salarjung Colony, Nanal Nagar, Hyderabad.
With heavy hearts
(Wife) Smt. Shantha Rathnam (Yadamma)
Relatives - Near & Dear
(S/2021/D00514)

1ST ANNIVERSARY

SRI. PATNAM SATYANARAYANA GOUD
DOD : 31-08-2019
Intertion by:
PATNAM BALAIAH GOUD FAMILY & BOMMANA LAXMAN GOUD AND MADHAVI

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

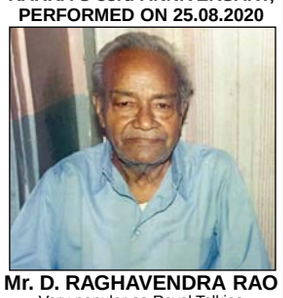
Smt. LAKSHMI RAJASREE GODISHALA
D.O.B: 17/06/1967 D.O.D: 22/08/2020
The Godishala and Koppula Family request the honor of your presence at the 10th Day Ceremony on 31/8/2020 (Monday) 11:00 A.M. at 10-5-684, Sai Nagar, Tukaramgate, East Marredpally, Sec-bad.
Deeply Mourned by: Husband, Daughter's, Family & Friends
Ph: +91 9398025114

SWAPNALOK SURYAKIRAN ESTABLISHMENT ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT

CH. JANARDHAN REDDY
D.O.D: 30.08.2020
May his soul rest in peace
From: Vice President - D. Srikanth
Gen. Secretary - Md. Nissar
Treasure - Murthy
Committee Members:
Raj Kumar Chatlani, Ravinder, Vijay Kapra, Sanklap Soni
(S/2021/D00516)

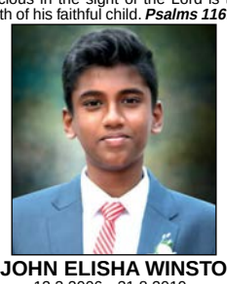
SHRADHANJALI

Late SHASHIKANT BHAGOJI
DOB: 29.11.1944 DOD: 29.08.2020
Shashi you will remain with us forever in our hearts & memory.
Inserted by
friends from Vivek Vardhini High School 1961 batch.
Phone: 9885335447

OM SRI RAGHAVENDRAYA NAMAHA
KAKKA'S 33rd ANNIVERSARY, PERFORMED ON 25.08.2020

Mr. D. RAGHAVENDRA RAO
Very popular as Royal Talkies Manager & Cashier @ Telephone Dept.
DOD: 31st Aug 1987
May your soul rest in peace & bless us.
Inserted by: Your Sons, Daughters, Grand Children & Great Grand Children
(S/2021/D00491)

The righteous shall be everlasting Remembrance

Miss ROSY ISRAEL
D.O.B: 29-08-1934 D.O.D: 29-08-2020
Retired Teacher of Rosary Convent
In Grief: Sister-in-law
Nieces & Nephews
(S/2021/D00515)

1st ANNIVERSARY
Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his faithful child. *Psalms 116:15*

T. JOHN ELISHA WINSTON
12.3.2006 - 31.8.2019
S/o Mr. T. John Anil Kumar
Mrs. T. Lily Suhasini
Prayer Meeting is not being held due to Covid-19 restrictions and compliances.
Inserted by: All Family Members
Ph: 9849635385
(S/2021/D00506)

On 24th Death Anniversary

Sri Appikatla Joseph
(Freedom Fighter) Ex-MP & Ex-MLC
Inserted by: Sons :
A. Jawahar (B.A)
Vice President, Congress, VZA
A.J. Kennedy
M.Sc. (School Correspondent)
Daughter-in-law :
Smt. Anuradha (B.A., B.Ed.)
Grandson : Anantharaj (Animation)
Brother-in-law : A. Jermiah

1st DEATH ANNIVERSARY

Smt. N. LALITHA JAGANNATH
W/o Late Sri N.V. Jagannath
DOB: 31.01.1941 - DOD: 11.10.2019
We really miss you Mom
Inserted by: Dr. B. Hemalatha, Sunita Bhardwaj, N.J. Pradeep Kumar, N.J. Sunil Kumar & Family Members
(B/2021/D00045)

IN LOVING MEMORY
on 24th Death Anniversary

Sri Appikatla Joseph
(Freedom Fighter) Ex-MP & Ex-MLC
Inserted by:
Daughter : Indira Gandhi (M.A.)
Grand Children:
Arun Chaitanya
(IIT, M.Tech, MBA, (USA)
Zeina Biswas
(Bachelor in Fashion Technology - Design)
Aditya M.S, (USA),
Ayaan Salivendra (Grandson),

SHRADHANJALI

Sri. B.VENKAT RAM REDDY
Retd. Joint Transport Commissioner (JTC)
D.O.B. 05-12-1935 | D.O.D. 22-08-2020
Deeply Mourned By:
Sons, Daughters -in-Law
Grand Children, Brothers and Sisters
Ph: 9395128223

24th ANNIVERSARY
I will sing praises to the congregation, in the midst of thy praises Heb 2:12

G. A. GOPAL
D.O.B.: 14-11-1936 Called unto Glory:. 31-08-1996
"You have smoothened path for us to follow, you gave us the courage to pursue the right way of Life.
You gave us everything, We learned and experienced with memories of your Love"
Inserted by : Family members

13th DEATH ANNIVERSARY
And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake.... Daniel. 12:02.
IN LOVING MEMORY OF

THADAMALLA SADA VINAY KUMAR
(N.F.C.Employee)
D.O.B.:20-8-1952 D.O.D.:31-08-2007
Inserted by : Mrs. T. Guna Sheela - Wife and Family Members

SHORT TAKES

ATMANIRBAR THEME AT IIT-H CELEBRATION

HARLEEN MINOCHA I DC
HYDERABAD, AUG. 30

The Indian Institute of Technology, Hyderabad (IIT-H) on Sunday, celebrated its 12th Foundation Day online, with Dr G. Satheesh Reddy, secretary, department of Defence R&D, and Chairman, DRDO, as chief guest. The event was based on the theme of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'.

Highlighting the importance of the New Education Policy (NEP-2020), Jayesh Ranjan, principal secretary, Industries, said, "The takeaway points from the NEP are in line with making India 'Atmanirbhar'. Integration of science and non-science courses, practical-based learning against book-based learning, internship, entrepreneurship, flexibility in the curriculum are important recommendations from NEP which are to be considered for implementation on priority."

Dr D. Nageshwar Reddy, Chairman, Asian Institute of Gastroenterology, a guest of honour, counted on biomedical sciences in building Atmanirbhar Bharat. "With the changing scenarios, the integration of engineering with medical science has become a reality. We need to connect the dots and integrate these two important streams of science for the larger benefit of mankind," Dr Nageshwar Reddy said.

The incubation ecosystem under the IIT's CfHE is doing a commendable job by developing superior technology, state-of-the-art products and working towards Atmanirbhar Bharat, he said.

Various faculty members and researchers at IIT-H were presented excellence awards. Convocation Day awardees from the 2020 graduating batch were also announced.

ACTIVISTS RESCUE 5 ABANDONED CATS, SLAM RWA ACTION

MADDY DEEKSHITH | DC
HYDERABAD, AUG. 30

The rescue of five abandoned domestic cats has triggered a mystery. Animal activities rescued the cats in Medchal. They alleged that a residential welfare association in Gundlapochampally had hired professional cat catchers to catch the cats and release them elsewhere.

Cases have been booked against Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PCA) Act for alleged abandoning and killings of cats.

Dattatraya Joshi, People For Animals (PFA) in Hyderabad, said the city was witnessing more cases of abandonment of pets than usual. He said under Section 11 (i) of PCA Act, 1960 abandoning an animal, leaving it in a situation that it suffers pain due to starvation or thirst is a punishable offence.

Joshi alleged that a cat catcher gang led by one Ashok had caught the cats at the gated community in a inhumane way and abandoned them at a nearby river in Mechal.

"We enquired into the incident and filed a case against the cat catchers at Petbasheerabad on August 23. Police caught three persons and booked a case and assured that the cats will be released in the same neighbourhood," Joshi said.

Curiously it was found that the felines that the cat catchers brought with them were not the ones seen in CCTV footage.

"On August 29, we came to know that the accused brought with them different cats to the police. In a span of a week, the accused have committed two crimes. We have learnt that the accused have been selling cats to those who eat them," Joshi alleged.

If found guilty the accused can be imprisoned for three months including a fine under Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, Joshi said. The fine is just ₹50.

This reporter tried to reach civic authorities but no one was available for comment.

One of the cats which was rescued

Small crowd seen at Khairatabad Ganesh

State honours to be accorded for Ganesh idol

MADDY DEEKSHITH I DC
HYDERABAD, AUG. 30

Devotees thronged the Khairatabad Ganesha idol on Sunday, the last holiday before the immersion on Tuesday.

Strict precautions were in place, and the crowd was less than previous years. That will be the trend during the immersion as well.

Only 16 organisers will participate in the procession for immersing the Balapur and Khairatabad idols on Tuesday morning. The Bhagyanagar Utsav Samiti appealed to citizens not to step out in huge numbers.

For the first time, state honours will be accorded to the Khairatabad Ganesh idol, according to samiti secretary Ravinuthala Shashidhar.

Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle* samiti chief secretary Bhagavanth Rao said that over 50,000 devotees had come to see the Khairatabad idol and the number would go up on Monday. Though it was a tough job, the committee had ensured that Covid19 guidelines including use of face marks and sanitisers and maintaining physical distancing were adhered to.

"Due to the special circumstances, only 10 per cent of the people came to see the idol when compared to last year. They were extremely co-operative and we hope they would extend similar cooperation until immersion day," Rao said. The Khairatabad procession will begin at about 7.30 am on Tuesday and the Balapur Ganesh procession will start at 9 am. Samiti secretary Shashidar said both idols will be immersed at about 11.30 am, the earliest finish for the ceremony.

"Ten organisers will accompany the Khairatabad Ganesh idol in the procession which will go past Telephone Bhavan, Secretariat and NTR Marg. The idol will be immersed near Crane No. 11. Six organisers will accompany the Balapur Ganesh idol," he said. Shashidhar said the devotees can perform virtual aarti to the idols during the procession which will be telecast on media channels or livestreamed on social media platforms. He said distribution of prasadam, water sachets, juice or eatables would be banned.

Ganesh idols being immersed on the 9th day in Hussainsagar lake in Hyderabad. — *S. SURENDER REDDY*

Brass bands, processions go missing in immersion

SANJAY SAMUEL PAUL | DC
HYDERABAD, AUG. 30

Immersion of Lord Ganesha idols has been a low key affair with very few pandals coming up in colonies and community areas this year because of restrictions imposed due to Coronavirus pandemic.

Most devotees have immersed idols in buckets or drums in their own homes. A few of them have taken them for immersion to public places including Tank Bund. Brass bands and immersion processions are missing.

Many families have also taken up the green challenge, immersing their clay idols in tubs and used the water in their garden or flower pots.

"Every year, we used to hire a trailer for immersion and go dancing in a procession accompanied by a brass band. This time, we have taken the idol in a car and just three of us went for immersion," a devotee Vasantha Balaji said.

The Balapur Ganesh laddu auction, the most awaited event on immersion day each year, will not be held this year. Last year, the 21-kg laddu at Balapur was auctioned for ₹17.6 lakh.

Despite state's claim, Covid cases keep rising as Aug ends

BALU PULIPAKA I DC
HYDERABAD, AUG. 30

Despite the recent confident forecasts by the state health department of Covid-19 coming under control in the city by the end of August, there has been no let-up in the fresh cases of the disease in the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) area.

Another 461 individuals tested positive for Covid-19 in the city even as the trend of new cases hovering around the 3,000 figure each day continued as on Saturday evening.

Earlier this month, senior health department officials at a press conference said that Covid-19 cases will begin seeing a fall by the end of August in the city and by the end of September in the state.

Previous forecasts in April that the end of Covid-19 was near in Telangana state too fell by the wayside as the disease only got stronger in its spread in the entire state over the past few months.

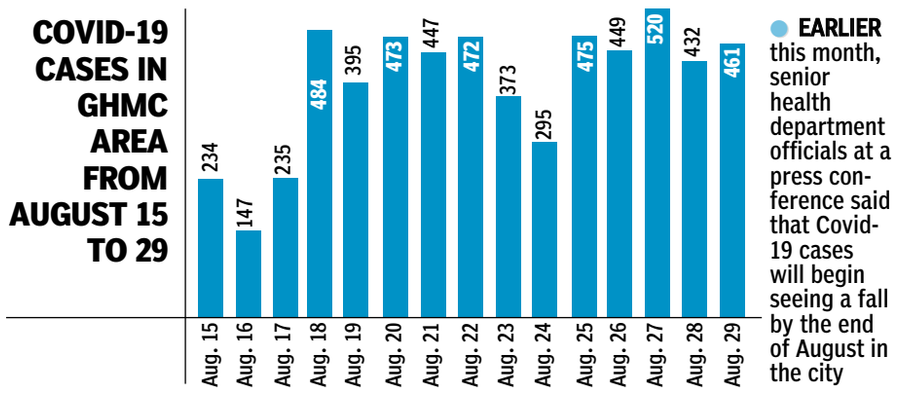
In its Sunday bulletin providing Covid-19 statistics for the 24-hour period between Friday and Saturday evening, the health department said the state registered 2,924 new Covid-19 cases with GHMC retaining the dubious hotspot status with the most number of daily cases.

So far, 1,23,090 people have been infected by the Coronavirus as per the bulletin. Of these, 90,988 have recovered including 1,638 between Friday and Saturday, the department said.

Ten more people lost their lives to the disease taking the toll to 818 from Covid-19. There were 31,284 active cases of whom 24,176 persons were in home or institutional isolation.

The department said it conducted 61,148 tests and from these, results of 1,801 tests were awaited.

Ranga Reddy district took the second spot with 213 fresh cases, followed by 181 in Khammam, 172 in Karimnagar, 171 in Nalgonda, 153 in Medchal-Malkajgiri, 140 in Nizamabad, 118 in Suryapet, and 102 in Warangal Urban districts.



BODY OF 70-YEAR-OLD ABANDONED

Hyderabad, Aug. 30: A 70-year old woman's body was allegedly left abandoned by her son on a footpath in the Banjara Hills, police said on Sunday.

The woman had died after having fever for the last four days, and her son claimed that he left the body wrapped in a blanket as he did not have the money to perform her last rites, police said. Some residents alerted the police after noticing the body.

During investigation, it was revealed that the woman used to beg in the area and that she lived with her son, a watchman, in an apartment complex, police said.

— *PTI*

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA
TELANGANA STATE AIDS CONTROL SOCIETY
TENDER NOTIFICATION
R.CNO.737/PROCU/TSACS/2020-21
Tenders are invited from the interested firms for procurement of Ancillary equipments for viral load labs, centrifuges refrigerators walk in coolers and certain printing items for us in the service center of TSACS. For details log on to **www.tsacs.telangana.gov.in.** Last date of receipt of tenders **14-09-2020.**
Sd/- Project Director
DIPR No.826-PP/CL-Agency/ADVT/1/2020-21, Dt:29-08-2020

IMA WANTS SOLATIUM FOR COVID-HIT STAFF

FROM PAGE 1

The Indian Medical Association (IMA) demanded the creation of a dedicated system to administer the issue.

They called for an inclusive national solatium for all doctors who have laid down their lives in service during the pandemic.

The IMA demanded setting up of a radical plan for the deployment of healthcare staff in light of the growing number of Covid-19 cases per day.

"Districts are not sensitive to the safety angle and the concerns of stress and fatigue of the medical manpower. Deploying doctors without intermittent quarantine periods or long working hours in PPE for Covid-19 care is not the same as 24x7 Covid control from safe offices," the letter said.

Government of India
DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY
NUCLEAR FUEL COMPLEX
ISO Cell & Incineration
ECIL Post, Hyderabad
Notice Inviting Tender
Tender Notice No: NFC/ISO/PT/02/2020
On behalf of the President of India, DCE(FT,Maint(ZF,SSTP,IMST),EPC,ISO & HR) invites sealed tenders from approved certifying bodies for the following work:

Description of Work	Estimated Cost (Rs)	EMD (Rs)	Duration of contract	Issue of tender document	Last date for submission of tender	Date of opening the sealed tenders
Integrated Management Systems certification of QMS, EMS and OHSMS in NFC and QMS and OHSMS in CISF	Rs. 20,81,225/-	Rs. 41,625/-	Three (3)Years	From 01.09.2020 to 10.09.2020	17.09.2020 Up to 1400Hrs	17.09.2020 at 1430Hrs

For further details visit our website **www.nfc.gov.in**

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA
GENERAL ADMN. DEPT., HYDERABAD-500001
Date: 30/08/2020
E-AUCTION TENDER NOTIFICATION FOR SALE OF SCRAP VEHICLES
In continuation to e-Auction Notification dated: 08-08-2020, quotations are invited for sale of scrap vehicles which are under possession of **General Administration Dept. Govt. of Telangana,** on **"As is where is"** and **"No recourse"** Basis. The further details are available on the website **https://bankauctions.in.** Hard Copy of the same is available at the Auction Sites. For any Query please contact **Mr. U. Subbarao, Mob No. 8142000061** or mail at **E-mail: subbarao@bankauctions.in**.
Total number of Lots of Scrap Vehicles for e-Auction : 11
Authorized Committee Members
Sd/- Neetu Kumari Prasad, IAS, Commissioner, Commercial Taxes
Sd/- D.S Chauhan, IPS, Addl. Commissioner of Police, Law & Order, Hyderabad
Sd/- C.Ramesh, JTC, RTA, Telangana State
R.O. No.: 413-DP/CL-AGENCY/ADVT/1/2020-21

Onam ready

Baby Riya poses in front of a *pookalam* in Secunderabad on Sunday, the eve of Onam.

Mourners ignore Muharram safety

ATHER MOIN I DC
HYDERABAD, AUG. 30

The Ashura, commemorating the martyrdom of Hussain ibn Ali, grandson of Prophet Mohammed, and his companions, was observed in the city on Sunday with religious solemnity and reverence.

Hundreds of mourners ignored the health protocols and violated police instructions.

The historic Bibi ka Alam was taken out from the Bibi ka Alawa at Dabeerpura to Masjid-e-Ilahi, Chadarghat. For the first time the alam (standard) was taken out in a mini-lorry as against the tradition of it taking out on a caparisoned elephant.

The procession passed through its regular route via Yakutpura, Alijah Kotla, Charminar, Gulzar Houz, Mir Alam Mandi, Darulshifa before culminating at Chaderghat.

Mourners took part in self-flagellation to express grief over the martyrdom along the Bibi ka Alam.

The police had prohibited peforming the self-flagellation this year.

Most mourners participated without using a face mask and physical distancing was ignored utterly.

In different khanqahs, the holy relics of Prophet Mohammed were put for public display. The management of Macca Masjid cancelled this programme as it is not open for the general public.

Sunni and Shia Muslims distributed food and sherbet and organised camps on the roads and colonies. Sunni Muslims observed fast on the day, and the ulemas and theologians delivered special sermons using social media.

WILD | SIGN **Cow carcass, pug marks indicate big cat is back**

Tiger returns to Warangal

ANUDEEP CEREMILLA | DC
WARANGAL, AUG. 30

The tiger, it appears, may have returned to the former unified Warangal district.

The finding of pug marks of a tiger, believed to be a female, in the Nimmagudem forest in Mahamutharam mandal of Jayashankar Bhupalpally district, marks the return of the big cat to the forests in the former Warangal district after more than a decade.

The pug marks were found after villagers informed forest department officials about the carcass of a cow in the forest.

According to district forest officer (DFO) K. Purushotham, the evidence from the pug marks pointed to the presence of a tigress in the area.

The officials also found signs — pug marks of the tiger and hoof marks of a calf and a cow — that indicated that while the calf managed to escape, the cow fell prey to the tiger.

With the presence of a tiger in the area causing some alarm among local villagers, forest department officials have alerted people to be careful and not venture into the forest.

Forest Section Officer Veeranna said announcements were made in the villages around the area where the tiger's pug marks were found asking people not to take their cattle into the forest for grazing.

Residents of villages in the area, who were apprehensive about their safety after the appearance of a tiger in the forest, have not had to contend with a tiger for more than a decade now.

The last time a tiger was seen in former Warangal district was in Kothaguda forest area of Pakhal Wildlife Sanctuary in 2009, Purushotham said. And the last time a tiger was seen in Karimnagar district, in the Mahadevpur forest area was in 2002, he said.

"The tigress moving in Nimmagudem could have come from the Indravati tiger reserve in Chhattisgarh or from Tadoba tiger reserve in Maharashtra. It might have got held up in Nimmaguda forests due to floods," Purushotham said.

Pug marks of tigress found at Nimmagudem

THE OFFICIALS found pug marks of the tiger and hoof marks of a calf and a cow — that indicated that while the calf managed to escape, the cow fell prey to the tiger. Forest officials told people not to venture out

सत्यमेव जयते
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CABINET SECRETARIAT
NATIONAL AUTHORITY CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION (NACWC)
(1st Floor, Chanakya Bhawan, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi-110021)
Date the 31st August, 2020
PUBLIC NOTICE
The requirements to submit Declarations to the National Authority Chemical Weapons Convention (NACWC) are mandated under section 12 of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) Act 2000.
In exercise of extant provisions of CWC Act 2000, it is notified that all the persons and facilities dealing with the chemicals belonging to Schedule 1, Schedule 2 and Schedule 3 categories, including those entities who have filed Annual Declaration of Past Activities (ADPA) for the calendar year 2019 and Annual Declaration of Anticipated Activities (ADAA) for the calendar year 2020, are hereby publically notified to file Annual Declaration of Anticipated Activities (ADAA) for the calendar year 2021 on or before **15th September, 2020.**
2. The ADAA of 2021 can be filed online using authenticated Digital Signature Certification (DSC/e-sign through the URL **(http://cwc.nacwc.nic.in** ***http://cwc [dot] nacwc[dot]nic[dot]in)*** from 1100 Hrs. of 1st September, 2020 and online window will remain open till 15th September, 2020.
3. Failure to furnish correct and complete information, with respect to declarations is a punishable offence under the CWC Act 2000.
4. All necessary information including detailed instructions, prescribed forms and related links etc. are available on the NACWC website **(www.nacwc.nic.in).** Clarification, if any, can also be sought from NACWC office by Telephone (011-24675694/24675465/24675690/24675524), FAX (011-24675767) or e-mail **(efilehelp.nacwc@nic.in** or **nacwc@nic.in).**
No. M-18016/2/2020-TECH
Sudhanshu Gupta
Director, NACWC &
Joint Secretary to Government of India
Davp 58101/11/0014/2021

DECCAN Chronicle

31 AUGUST 2020

In guise of Covid war, it's unbridled hate

The savage violence let loose by the police on Muharram processions in Srinagar last Saturday is likely to deepen the perception that physical assaults on the populace in the Valley is the action of the first resort as far as the government is concerned. At least 19 persons have been reported to be wounded, one of whom is said to be in a critical state. A dozen of the injured have taken pellet hits, including in the face. This is suggestive of the fact that pellet guns were fired from close range.

When scores were blinded or lost sight in one eye as a result of pellet injuries in the post-BurhanWani protests of 2016 in Kashir valley, the government mulled minimising if not eliminating the use of pellet guns until suitable replacements were developed. The faulty trajectory of the discharge from close range from these weapons was hitting people in the face, and head and chest areas, causing injuries of a grave nature. Such weapons were not proving to crowd deterrents in volatile situations but instruments of possible death, which raised political costs for the local administration and the country internationally.

Clearly, no active thinking on ending the use of such weapons may exist now except on paper. Last year, not long after the ending of J&K's constitutional autonomy, the government forces in Srinagar had used pellet guns on a thick crowd of civilian protesters in the Soura-Anchar locality, a dirt poor area of the old city. The incident, which caused widespread injury, had raised international concern, and gave the lie to the orchestrated government propaganda that people had accepted the ending of autonomy peacefully and had not protested.

Last Thursday the Supreme Court disallowed the holding of Muharram processions anywhere in the country on the ground that this may lead to the blaming of a particular community (the Shia Muslim) for the spread of the Coronavirus (presumably as had happened in the case of the Tablighi Jamaat). If this was a common sense precaution the top court sounded, the authorities in Kashmir enforced it with brutal energy.

Over the years, Muharram processions in Kashmir have been routinely limited to specified areas in order not to take chances with sectarian clashes, but last week's violence testifies to the uncommon zeal that the government brought to the fighting of Covid-19 by cracking down with unqualified force on the small Muharram processions. This stood in sharp contrast with police behaviour at religious ceremonies of India's majority community in many parts of the country, sometimes held with official sanction and display of devotion, underlining the grievance of many that the blatant repression of Kashmir and the taking away of J&K's historical rights owes to the fact of the Valley's denominational status in contrast with the rest of the country.

There is no peace in Kashmir, and the government's fear of the people seems real. Top political figures, no longer in detention, are routinely prevented by the police from leaving their homes. Last week, a group of protesters of the People's Democratic Party was scattered through police action. This was immediately followed by the police attacks on Muharram processions. These are signs that betray the government's insecurities.

The show must go on

The Chennai Super Kings retinue has been like a bat flying among pigeons in the IPL bio-bubble in the UAE. A whole XI of the training staff as well as two players have tested positive thus introducing a degree of uncertainty into the conduct of IPL 2020 and the participation of an international cast of players. The team's vice-captain Suresh Raina has had to leave Dubai after tragedy struck his uncle's family in Pathankot in Punjab as violent robbers trespassed into their home. One of eight teams may have run into a jinx of sorts but that cannot be reason enough to abandon the IPL season.

There is no cricket business like T20 business and the show must go on to nurture the promise to the people that a new normal can be established. Of course, there are rules to be followed, which only iron discipline can ensure. International sport set up very successful bio-secure environments in Europe, UK and USA, the worst affected country in the Covid-19 pandemic that is holding the world in its thrall. Soccer has been played, so too cricket in England with only the occasional player indiscretion to be dealt with.

The IPL is a ₹4,000 crore direct TV rights revenue per annum entertainment industry with several hundreds of crores more in team and player sponsorships, besides being a big spender in chartered flights, hotels and resorts, etc. The point is a high degree of responsibility commensurate with such riches must go hand in hand, with everyone contributing to the safety of the bio-bubble.

One team may have been foolhardy in its overenthusiasm in also holding a preparatory camp to please its iconic captain Dhoni's wishes in Chennai. But that shouldn't stop the whole circus, as the great showman P.T. Barnum said when they burned down his tent. The show must go on and UAE with 379 deaths to date from under 70,000 Coronavirus cases in six months is a safer bet than India that is seeing as many cases in a day.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

ADITYA SINHA
Editor

K. SUDHAKAR
Printer & Publisher

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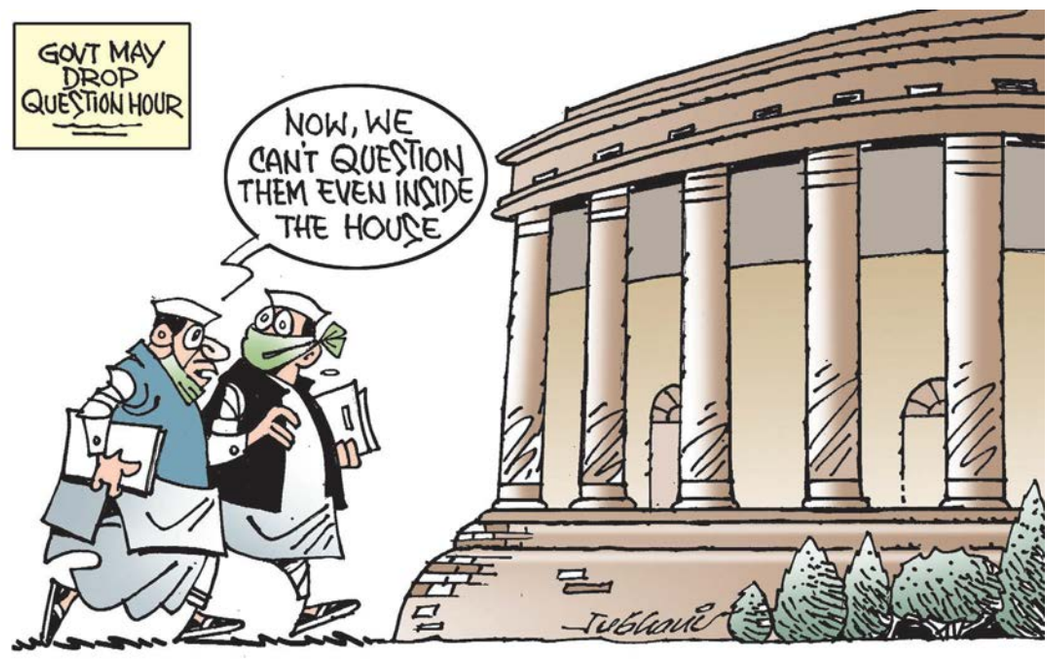
Thiruvananthapuram: St Joseph's Press, TC 15/1040, Cotton Hill, Thycaud (PO), Thiruvananthapuram 695 014
Kozhikode: Door No 6/1002 E, First Floor of City Mall, Opp. YMCA, Kannur Road, Kozhikode - 673 001, Fax : 0495 4019 018
Gram: CHRONICLE Postal registration no: No. H/SD-348/2006-08

Subhani



The centrality of dissent

Manish Tewari

State of the Union

The Nasdiya Sukta, a major verse in the Rigveda, states, *"Then He, who created all that is, or did not, Who looks upon everything from the highest heaven, He alone knows. Or maybe He too does not."*

In its very first intellectual iterations the Indic civilisation laid down its commitment to doubt and dissent, its determination to address the ambiguities of both the human mind and the omniscient gods through a critical lens.

It was this combination of constant seeking and continual absence of certitude that made our civilisation so fecund. A crucible of key human ideas and systems of thought. Questioning shaped us. Our foundational texts, the key Upanishads, were exploratory, provisional, in their wisdom. No rajan, no rishi, no god, could escape the sincere question. None could turn their face away from the mirror.

Anyone could be cross-examined on their dharma, from the unimpeachable Yudhishthira, to the divine Rama and Krishna. Your conduct defined your stature. No one's station was fixed. It was made and re-made through beliefs and action. It was always up for interrogation.

The genius of Mohandas Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Babasaheb Ambedkar — who gave up their entire lives to restore a wounded civilisation — lay in the same seed: constant self-examination and self-correction; and a brutal honesty inextricably aligned to the greater good.

The free society they struggled to create, even as it seems to borrow from the language of a more recent West, actually owes its deepest debt to our own ancient impulses. The conviction that free citizens, thinking citizens, questioning citizens, lie at the root of the good society. The finest rajan is not the unquestioned master of the people. The finest rajan is the embodiment of a questioning people.

More than 1,600 years after the glorious triumph of dissent in the death of Socrates, the Magna Carta was the first successful act of political dissent in 1215. It hewed into stone the first principles of Constitutional Democratism and sowed the seeds of a million mutinies. It proclaimed "No free man shall be seized or imprisoned, or stripped of his rights or possessions, or outlawed or exiled, or deprived of his standing in any other way, nor will we proceed with force against him, or send others to do so, except by the lawful judgment of his equals or by the law of the land. To no one will we sell, to no one deny or delay right or justice".

It gave birth to a central tenet of modern societies, "Be ye ever so high, the law is above you", by holding that no man is above the law, not even the king. The Magna Carta has been for 800 years a plinth idea of free people, free societies and free nations around the world.

On the continent, the Magna Carta was succeeded by the Renaissance and Reformation and the battle between old blind feudalisms and dogmas against the engines of human thought was noisily afoot. Answers were demanded not just from divine rulers but also from divinity. Political dissidents were persecuted, exiled, and heretics often burnt at the stake.

But the tsunami of change was beyond being bottled anymore. The next few hundred years would see more change than the millennia and a half before. The fruit of human inquiry would flower. Technology in the shape of the printing press would spread dissident ideas rapidly and spark fresh questioning and reform movements. It would hasten the end of Europe's Dark Ages.

The Age of Enlightenment would push for individual liberty and religious tolerance. The English Bill of Rights in 1689 would limit the powers of the monarch and set out rights of individuals including free speech.

The founding of United States of America itself would become perhaps the most successful act of historical dissent — a revolt against the feudal order of Europe by people who went to the New World to create a new land of equality and opportunity.

Dissent is thus cardinal to the idea of the United States. The American founding fathers enshrined the right to dissent in the First Amendment to the Constitution for the American nation was baked in the oven of contesting ideas. Justice Oliver Wendell consecrated this in his famous dissenting opinion "Abrams vs United States" a century ago. He wrote, "But when men have realised that time has upset many fighting faiths, they may come to believe even more than they believe the very foundations of their own conduct that the ultimate good desired is better reached by free trade in ideas."

The twentieth century saw the rise of Communist and Fascist regimes. These regimes were set against all dissent. (One reason Nehru, with rare foresight and integrity, refused to meet Benito Mussolini in 1936, even while transiting through Rome.) It saw the monstrous excesses of Stalin and Mao, just to name the worst two. An estimated 50-100 million people, including their finest minds, died due to their autocratic — not-to-be-questioned — policies. In time both schools of thought and governance collapsed, having inflicted untold suffering on innocent millions.

Adolf Hitler's concentration camp regime also commenced with the persecution of his political opponents, the Social Democrats. They were tortured and executed by the Nazi Gauleiters and Reichsleiters. While the Social Democratic ideal survived the ravages of Nazism, Hitler and his mistress were compelled to commit suicide and their bodies were charred beyond recognition. Mussolini and his mistress, similarly, were strung up in public by their own oppressed countrymen.

Ultimately what remains are the voices of dissidents celebrated for speaking truth to power, for attempting a restoration of humanity's faith in itself. Writer Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Soviet communism's trenchant critic, built his Nobel Prize lecture around a Russian proverb: "One word of truth outweighs the whole world." Andrei Sakharov, another famous dissident, stated that, "A man may hope for nothing, but nevertheless speak because he cannot simply remain silent."

The Indian national movement is easily the finest example of the power and creativity of dissent, both internal and external. One drove out by moral force and principled protest the most powerful colonial power in history since the Romans.

The other, the healthy, productive dissent within the key architects of the freedom struggle — arguably the greatest assemblage ever of remarkable leaders — is what made the former possible. From their arguments, their disagreements and agreements, their unwavering goal of the greater good, that the sublime idea of India was born.

The argumentative Indian is not a trope. It is the truth upon which our civilisation stands.

The Indian national movement is easily the finest example of the power and creativity of dissent, both internal and external

The author is a lawyer, Member of Parliament and former Union information and broadcasting minister. The views expressed are personal.

LETTERS

TEACHERS' PLIGHT

It is most unfortunate that teachers who were selected in 1998 are still fighting for jobs (*Teachers fight 22 yrs to get jobs, DC, Aug. 30*). Some of the teachers have also died in this waiting period. Government should concentrate on Vidya and Vaidya to develop society, particularly the poor people.

Balekar Shanker Lal
Hyderabad

UNLOCK PROCESS

It is strange that the government has opened liquor shops and restaurants but not bars and restaurants. These owners had paid fee but are forced to suffer losses. Attenders, stewarts and cooks are also losing out on account of this.

T. Kailash Ditya
Hyderabad

PROCESSIONS

The Hyderabad police commissioner's decision to ban Ganesh and Muharram processions is appreciated. Both communities should understand that it is in the interest of citizens who may get exposed to Covid-19. Life is more important than people getting exposed to this pandemic.

Shahbaz Husain
Hyderabad

FIX SCHOOL FEE

The Telangana state government which announced online classes for schools from September 1 must also fix a fee structure for private schools. They must take into consideration the fact that many parents have lost their jobs in the pandemic and private firms are paying 50 per cent salary.

Rohit Pentam
Secunderabad

Vain bid to locate missing plane

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

CALCUTTA, Aug. 30

Two Air Force helicopters and two Indian airlines aircraft battled rains and winds to scour the 2,000 kilometre wooded hilly belt from Shillong to Nagaland border today but failed to locate the Fokker-Friendship plane which has been missing since yesterday with 39 people aboard.

A Pakistani Air Force plane also made an infructuous aerial search of the border areas in East Pakistan in view of the possibility of the plane having accidentally strayed across the border. Both aerial and ground searches are to be resumed tomorrow.

Kishwar Desai

London Diary

The latest ruse to meet people; e-cycles are the new rage in UK

There is always another side to the story — and right now it belongs to the anti-vaccine lobby — which was demonstrating in London over the weekend stating that the Covid-19 pandemic is nothing but a conspiracy by Bill Gates! None of the gathered 10,000 were wearing masks and for them there is no such thing as the killer virus either. So what happened to those millions who died, and millions more who were hospitalised all over the world? Were they somehow brainwashed by the vaccine makers into making themselves sick? It would be difficult to find a more adamant bunch of Brits, whose opinions trump over scientific research (pun intended!). But they can be understood, if we place them next to the flat-earth lobby, or anything else that seems an inexplicable denial of everything that is happening in the real world. We can only hope that their mingling in large crowds as they protest and ask for a return to "normal life" will not lead to a spike in the virus — while the rest of us continue to 'social-distance'.

Another lot of demonstrators are also going be out and about soon — the Extinction Rebellion — which is an environmental movement and is having its demonstration, too. If it is anything like their demonstration last year, any traffic movement will be impossible in Central London and that is not a bad thing either. Is this the latest way to hang out with buddies — organise a demonstration?

I never imagined that we would actually hope for colder weekends. We are thankful that the August bank holiday weekend threatens to be a cold one. Well, hot summer weekends mean no distancing, traffic jams on country roads and crowded beaches. Then that in turn leads to a revival of Covid infections. We need some stay-at-home cold days and nights to slow down the pandemic.

The latest data show a sharp upsurge in new cases, highest since June and in four figures. Whether this will stay next month or is just a blip is anyone's guess. September is crucial because schools reopen. There has been a battle going on between the government, which wants schools to open, and the teachers' union, which is asking for guarantees about safety. The Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, keeps changing his mind — but now it seems he has decided to follow the practice in Scotland where a sensible compromise is being worked out about masks and distancing and bubbles.

The UK government writ runs only to England in Corona matters and the devolved authorities Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are doing much better. But while the government led by Boris would like people to come back to work — not all companies agree and some City financial firms are happy to let their workers stay at home. Tube trains will have to be monitored for distancing. Many are buying e-cycles that allow them to speed fast and effortlessly to work. How London traffic will cope with bicycles as well as e-cycles remains to be seen!

This is the season for the Proms. It is a high point in the transition between summer and autumn. It is a musical feast in the splendid location of the Royal Albert Hall. Day after day famous composers and singers and soloists perform divine music, which is broadcast on the BBC which sponsors the programme. If you want a seat you have to wrangle it from those who have bought seats permanently but may let you have it for a night for a hefty price. If not, you stand at the back as part of the promenade. On the final day of the Proms, the climax comes with the playing of Land of Hope and Glory and,of course, Rule Britannia with many standing at the back waving Union Jacks and singing a raucous chorus. All around the country people gather in open places and parks and gardens and sing along with those in the Royal Albert Hall. This has led to some light-hearted displays of patriotism. But now it seems BBC is not sure it is culturally appropriate to celebrate the past as it is associated with Empire and slavery. The culture war, which has been going on since Black Lives Matter erupted four months ago, has still not abated. So the BBC has proposed that the music will be played but no singing of the lyrics.

You can just imagine what that has done. As it is the BBC is in trouble. It is financed by the income from the TV licence paid for by everyone who has a TV and costs £175. The Blair government gave everyone above 75 a free TV licence as part of its settlement with BBC. But the Conservatives (who never liked the BBC) have removed the subsidy. So BBC wants the elderly to pay. This is the precise audience who like Rule Britannia and the flag waving. Amol Rajan who is media editor with BBC has just accused it of becoming "the broadcasting wing for Black Lives Matter"! There is a petition going around asking Lord Hall, the departing director general of the BBC, to change his mind. BLM is impacting everything now, even music!

***Kishwar Desai** is an award-winning author. Her 6th book, the biography of the 1930s superstar, Devika Rani,* The Longest Kiss *will soon be out.*

SHORT TAKES

411 VILLAGES MAROONED IN MP, 5 LAKH AFFECTED

DC CORRESPONDENT
BHOPAL, AUG. 30

Nearly five lakh people in 411 villages under 12 districts in Madhya Pradesh have been affected by flashfloods in various rivers in the state caused by torrential rains in the last 72 hours.

At least seven persons were killed in rain-related incidents in the state in the last 24 hours.

Four children were killed when a mud wall of a house collapsed on them while they were playing on a road in Banhara village under Umariapan police limits in Katni district on Saturday evening.

"As many as 411 villages in 12 districts have been affected. Army and State Disaster Response Force have been deployed in rescue and relief operations," Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan who conducted aerial survey of the flood-hit areas in the state for the second day on Sunday said.

Mr Chouhan briefed prime minister Narendra Modi on the flood situation in the state.

Reports said the torrential rains have caused damage to properties and standing crops.

ODISHA SEES 32 RIVER BREACHES DUE TO FLOODS

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO DC
BHUBANESWAR, AUG. 30

The apprehension of high floods in different rivers of Odisha proved authentic on Sunday as at least 32 breaches occurred in major river systems in the state. Majority of the breaches were reported in the Brahmani river system in Jajpur district.

The high flood in Odisha, according to official sources, had by Sunday evening destroyed at least eight lakh hectares of farmland and left as many as 16 people dead.

According to Jyotirmaya Rath, the chief engineer of the state water resources department, as many as 24 breaches happened in the Brahmani river system, while Mahanadi system reported two. The remaining breaches occurred in Kharasrota, Jalaka and Baitarani river systems.

According to state Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) Pradeep Kumar Jena, Bari and Dasarath block areas in Jajpur district were severely hit with thousands of hectares of standing crop getting washed away in the gushing floods of Brahmani, Baitarani and Kharasrotha rivers. Rhea SRC said the flood situation in three rivers- Subarnarekha, Budhabalanga and Baitarini is improving.

RARE BUTTERFLY SIGHTED IN CHHATTISGARH

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY I DC
BHOPAL, AUG. 30

A rare species of butterfly has been sighted in a reserve forest in Chhattisgarh. The spotted angle butterfly, caprona agama in zoological terms, has been spotted in the Bharamdeo reserve forest in Kawardha district by a survey team of the Chhattisgarh forest department.

"The rare butterfly species has been sighted in Bharamdeo reserve forest," local divisional forest officer (DFO), Dilraj Prabhakar, said.

In fact, this was the first time the species has been found in Central India.

"Based on published research, the species is reported for the first time in central India in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. The species of butterfly is rarely sighted rarely in India," researcher Dr Rajendra Gupta told this newspaper on Sunday.

The species is found in south India, Maharashtra, Uttaranchal, and Arunachal Pradesh and Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, southern China, and Java.

"The species is migratory in nature. It may have migrated from north-east to Chhattisgarh through south Bastar via the eastern state of Odisha," Dr Sheila Dubey, who has done her PhD on butterfly species in Central India, told *Deccan Chronicle*.

All set for Onam

A family makes a *pookalam*, an intricate and colourful arrangement of flowers, a quintessential element of Onam, on the eve of the festival at Kizhakkum Muri in Kozhikode, Kerala, on Sunday. — *PTI*

INDIA JAILS ARE OVERCROWDED, UNDERSTAFFED, FINDS NCRB

New Delhi, Aug. 30 Jails across India remained overcrowded in 2019 with these facilities lodging 4.78 lakh prisoners against the actual capacity of 4.03 lakh, reveals the latest data by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB).

On the other hand, the prisons were understaffed with a sanctioned strength of 87,599, while the actual strength was 60,787 as on December 31, 2019, the data showed.

The actual capacity of prisons has increased to 4.03 lakh in 2019 from 3.91 lakh in 2017 and 3.96 lakh in 2018 (as on December 31 of these respective years), it said.

The number of prisoners lodged in various jails increased to 4.78 lakh in 2019 from 4.50 lakh in 2017 and 4.66 lakh in 2018 (as on December 31 of each year).

The total number of prisons in the country were 1,361, 1,339 and 1,350 at the end of 2017, 2018 and 2019, respectively. The occupancy rates during the period rose steadily at 115.1 per cent, 117.6 per cent and 118.5 per cent, respectively, according to the data.

Out of the 4.78 lakh prisoners in 2019, 4.58 lakh were men and 19,913 women, the NCRB, under the Union home ministry, stated.

The total 1,350 prisons in the country in 2019 consisted of 617 sub jails, 410 district jails, 144 Central jails, 86 open jails, 41 special jails, 31 women jails, 19 Borstal School and two other jails, it added. The Central jails had the highest capacity of inmates (1.77 lakh) followed by district jails (1.58 lakh) and sub jails (45,071) last year.

Indian Navy warship enters South China Sea stealthily

Warship was deployed after June 15 clash with Chinese PLA

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG. 30

The Indian Navy reportedly deployed one of its frontline warships in the South China Sea much to the displeasure of the Chinese who raised objections over the move during diplomatic talks between the two countries.

The warship was reported to have been deployed in the South China Sea after the June 15 clash with Chinese soldiers in the Galwan Valley in which 20 Indian soldiers were killed.

China objected to the presence of Indian Navy in the South China Sea where the PLA navy has been trying to consolidate its position. The US navy has been conducting exercises in the South China Sea to challenge the dominance that the Chinese navy is trying to establish in the region. US aircraft carriers *USS Ronald* and *USS Nimitz*, along with their escorting cruisers and destroyers have conducted exercises in the South China Sea to challenge the Chinese navy's hegemony in the region which has been threatening its neighbours.

According to reports, the Indian warship was continuously maintaining contact with their US counterparts deployed in the region over secure communication systems. As part of the routine drills, the Indian warship was being constantly updated about the status of the movement of military vessels of other countries there. The entire mission was carried out in a very hush-hush manner to avoid any public glare on the navy's activities.

The Indian Navy had also deployed its frontline vessels along the Malacca Straits, near the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and the route from where the Chinese navy enters the Indian Ocean Region (ICR), to keep a check on any activity of the Chinese navy. It is a crucial sea trade route for China.

The Indian Navy also conducted exercises on the Andaman and Nicobar islands and has also deployed MiG-29K fighter aircraft on the islands.

Last month, Indian Navy warships and the US Navy's carrier strike group led by nuclear powered aircraft carrier, *USS Nimitz*, on Monday carried out a passage exercise (PASSEX) in the ICR.

78,487 Covid cases see India cross the 36-lakh mark

SANJAY KAW | DC
NEW DELHI, AUG. 30

With a record surge of 78,487 fresh Coronavirus cases in the past 24 hours, India's Covid-19 tally zoomed past 36 lakh on Sunday, just a week after it crossed the 30-lakh mark. India saw one of the highest single-day jumps in Coronavirus infections reported by any country in the world since the start of the pandemic. The United States set the previous record on July 17, with 77,638 cases in one day. In the past 24 hours, 906 deaths linked to the highly contagious disease were reported, taking the overall number of fatalities to 64,547.

The country further strengthened its diagnostic capacity by performing a record number of 10.5 lakh-plus tests in a day to detect Covid-19. The total tests done in the country has crossed 4.14 crores.

The exponential jump in testing capacity has led to an upsurge in the tests per million to 30,044 as of date.

India continued to be the third worst-hit country by the deadly infection in the world after the United States and Brazil, by recording the highest single-day surge since August 4. The country has recorded over 75,000 cases daily for the past four days.

It took India 213 days to reach 35 lakh cases. The nation's infections rose from 20 lakhs to 30 lakhs in 16 days, 10 lakhs to 20 lakhs in 21 days and it had taken 59 days for the cases to cross the 10 lakh-mark.

It took 110 days for Covid-19 cases in India to reach one lakh and just 59 days more to go past the 10-lakh mark.

The country has registered over five lakh cases in the last one week. In the last 24 hours, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh reported the highest number of fresh cases.

These five states also recorded the highest number of deaths

With the total Coronavirus cases going up to 35.44 lakhs, the recovery rate has also increased to 76.61 per cent.

The country's positivity rate now stands at 7.46 per cent.

CBI grills Rhea, brother for 9 hours

AISHWARYA KHOKLE | DC
MUMBAI, AUG. 30

The CBI on Sunday grilled Rhea Chakraborty for the third consecutive day for nine hours in connection with the Sushant Singh Rajput suicide. Her brother Showik was also grilled by teams of the Central agency with the process starting at 10.30 am at the DRDO guest house, Santacruz.

Sushant's house help Keshav and house manager Samuel Miranda were also questioned by the CBI on Sunday. The investigators are coordinating with the ED and the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) who are also probing the suicide case.

The officials are looking into the alleged transfer of funds from the actor's account and use of his debit and credit cards to make payments. The CBI is also verifying if the money was transferred from the deceased actor's account to either Rhea or her family members.

The ED has, meanwhile, summoned businessman Gaurav Arya for questioning after some text messages between him and Rhea surfaced.

CPM leaders decline Kishor-led I-PAC bid

RAJIB CHOWDHURI I DC
KOLKATA, AUG. 30

For the first time, election strategist Prashant Kishor and his political consultancy firm, Indian Political Action Committee (I-PAC), hired by the Trinamul to brighten its prospect for the third consecutive term in power, have received a setback in West Bengal in the run up to the assembly election next year.

Eyeing the Communists with a clean image, I-PAC last week contacted former state information technology (IT) minister, Debesh Das, in a bid to rope him in. The attempt failed as the former CPM MLA of Entally in central Kolkata outright rejected the offer.

CPM Kolkata district secretary Kallol Majumdar said, "On Friday, Kishor's team called up Das and wanted to know how he performed as an MLA in his constituency. They also sought a meeting with him for discussion." Das said, "As soon as I heard the call was from Kishor's team, I rejected the offer"

According to the CPM sources, two leaders of the party in North Bengal were approached before Das by I-PAC. They were two-time former MLA of Dhupguri, Lakshmikanta Roy, and ex-Jalpaiguri MP, Mahendra Kumar Roy. Both, however, rejected the offers. The three refusals left the ruling party in a spot. Neither I-PAC nor the TMC were available for comments.

Das, erstwhile professor of Jadavpur University, was not only a three-time MLA during the Left rule in the state but also served as the IT minister in CM Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee's Cabinet.

Rally in Srinagar teargassed

YUSUF JAMEEL I DC
SRINAGAR, AUG. 30

Shia mourners in large numbers on Sunday defied curfew-like restrictions at several places across the Kashmir valley, including the central towns of Budgam and Magam and Srinagar's Zadibal area by taking out tazia and zuljanah processions to commemorate Muharram.

Except at Zadibal, where 16 persons were injured in police action, these events passed off peacefully after the mourners, including women, marched along the streets and alleys beating their chests, reciting elegies and chanting slogans and some of them also self-flagellating.

In Budgam, a predominantly Shia town located 27 km west of Srinagar, thousands of mourners participated in the Zuljanah procession. Zuljanah, bought and raised by Prophet Muhammad, was the horse of Imam Hussain and a very important character in the battle of Karbala. The Zuljanah procession is taken out by Shia Muslims only on the tenth day of Muharram, the first month of Islamic calendar, when Imam Hussain was martyred at Karbala.

Similar processions were taken out also in some other parts of Kashmir whereas elsewhere in the valley only tazia, or mourning processions and rallies, without the participation of Zuljanah replicas were organised by the mourners.

At Zadibal in the heart of Srinagar, the police fired pellet shotguns and also lobbed teargas to disperse the mourners who took to the streets in a tazia procession and clashed with the former. Reports said that 16 persons were injured, most of them receiving multiple pellet wounds. The police detained about 20 people for violating the restrictions in force.

We are not anyone's puppets, says Farooq

New Delhi, Aug. 30: Reacting sharply to Pakistan hailing the recent Gupkar Declaration in which six political parties of Jammu and Kashmir vowed to fight collectively against the abrogation of Article 370, National Conference (NC) president Farooq Abdullah on Sunday asserted that "we are not anyone's puppets".

"Pakistan has always abused mainstream political parties of Jammu and Kashmir but now suddenly they like us", the former chief minister said when asked about Pakistan foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi's statement that the declaration issued by the NC, PDP, Congress and three other parties was "not an ordinary occurrence but an important development".

"Let me make it clear that we are not anyone's puppets, neither New Delhi's nor of anyone across the border. We are answerable to the people of Jammu and Kashmir and will work for them," he said from Srinagar.

In response to a question on cross-border terrorism, Abdullah said, "I would urge Pakistan to stop sending armed men into Kashmir. We want an end to the bloodshed in our state. All political parties in Jammu and Kashmir are committed to fight for our rights peacefully, including for what was unconstitutionally snatched away from us on August 5 last year." — *PTI*

RADIO | WAVES

Rahul slams broadcast, says PM is talking of toys when students are worried about exams

Etikoppaka toymaker's effort is Modi's Mann Ki Baat

DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs
NEW DELHI, AUG. 30

In his *Mann ki Baat* radio address on Sunday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said India could become a big hub of toy production and that "it is the time to get vocal for local toys". Hailing efforts by wooden toymaker C.V. Raju from Visakhapatnam, and the Etikoppakaa" toys from his village that were once very popular, Modi noted while "the global toy industry is of more than seven lakh crore rupees, India's share is very little in this".

The Prime Minister said it was time for start-ups to be "vocal for local toys" and urged them to develop computer games in and based on India, citing the nation's rich heritage and traditions that can drive innovations in the toy and gaming industry.

"Our country has so many ideas, so many concepts; our history has been very rich. Can we make games based on that? I call upon the young talent of the country — make games in India and make games based on India too. It is said... let the game begin! So, let us start the game," he said.

He touched on a number of issues in the broadcast, and lauded people for showing restraint while celebrating festivals during the pandemic.

Mr Modi also urged people to raise dogs of Indian breeds at their homes if they wanted to keep a pet dog.

Modi touched on a number of issues in the radio broadcast as he lauded people for maintaining unprecedented restraint and simplicity in celebrating festivals during the Covid-19 pandemic and praised farmers for an increase in the sowing area for crops.

Underscoring a deep connection between Indian festivals and environment, he noted that eco-friendly Ganesha idols were installed at most places recently.

Ganeshotsav was also celebrated at certain places, he said, praising people's discipline.

Lauding farmers, Modi said they have proven their mettle during the pandemic.

He said the area for the sowing of kharif crops increased by seven per cent compared to last year, paddy by nearly 10 per cent, pulses close to five per cent, oilseeds around 13 per cent and cotton by about three per cent.

He said September will be observed as 'Nutrition Month' and added that the need for having a good nutrition is being converted into a "mass movement", especially in villages.

Meanwhile, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on said that the students wanted the Prime Minister to address the issue of NEET and JEE exams in his monthly radio programme, but he spoke on toys.

His remark came after Modi address said that the country has the talent and ability to become a hub for the toy industry and called upon startups and entrepreneurs to "team up for toys".

Using the hashtag "Mann_Ki_Nahi_Students _Ki_Baat", Gandhi tweeted, "JEE-NEET aspirants wanted the PM to do 'Pariksha Pe Charcha' but the PM did 'Khilone Pe Charcha'." Gandhi and his Congress party have supported a demand by a section to postpone the NEET and JEE examinations, which are starting from September 1, in view of the pandemic.

Indian Army dogs earn PM's praise

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG. 30

Indian Army dogs are playing a crucial role in many operations and are force multipliers. In the last one year, Indian Army dogs have helped in detection of 30 IEDs and in five operations they tracked down terrorists which led to their elimination, said senior officials. They have also helped in 14 operations which led to recovery of arms and ammunition in the last one year.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday in his *Mann Ki Baat* address talked about Indian army dogs "Sophie" and "Vida" who have been awarded the Chief of Army Staff 'Commendation Cards'.

Vida, a Labrador is from the Army Dog Unit located in Northern Command (J&K).

Sophie, a Cocker Spaniel is with special forces 'Special Frontier Force' and is an explosive detection dog.

IN BRIEF

Israeli tanks hit Hamas targets

Jerusalem: Israeli tanks hit Hamas targets in the Gaza Strip on Sunday, the army said, as Palestinian balloon attacks across the border continued despite international truce efforts. An early-morning military statement said there had been airborne explosive and incendiary attacks into southern Israel on Saturday. "In response to the ongoing events, a short while ago... tanks struck military posts belonging to the Hamas terror organization in the southern Gaza Strip," the English-language statement said. There were no immediate reports of casualties.

Death toll in China mishap rises to 29

Beijing: The number of people killed when a restaurant in northern China collapsed has climbed to 29, state media said on Sunday, with efforts to find survivors brought to a close. The two-storey building in Xiangfen county, Shanxi province, came down on Saturday morning during an 80th birthday party, according to official news agency Xinhua. A total of 57 people have been pulled from the debris of the Juxian restaurant, with dozens injured. Seven people are seriously hurt, although Xinhua said the injuries were "not life-threatening". State broadcaster *CGTN* said the rescue operation ended in the early hours of Sunday morning. The cause of the collapse is unknown and the central government's State Council said it would supervise an investigation by provincial authorities.

Top French military officer arrested

Paris: A senior French military officer based abroad is under investigation for "serious security breaches," the defense minister said on Sunday. Europe-1 radio reported that the officer served on a NATO base in Italy and is accused of treason for passing "ultra-sensitive" information to Russian secret services. The French Defense Ministry would not provide details about the officer. Speaking on Europe-1 on Sunday, Defense Minister Florence Parly said only that a judicial procedure is underway and the French military has taken "necessary protective measures" after the breaches. The Paris prosecutor's office, which is handling the case, would not comment. NATO did not immediately respond to requests for information. Parly also said on Sunday that France is putting "massive investment" into military activities in space — notably after a 2018 incident in which a Russian satellite cozied up to a French one in an apparent effort to eavesdrop on secure military communications.

Trump supporters, protesters clash in Portland, 1 killed

San Francisco, Aug. 30: A person was shot dead on Saturday in Portland following clashes between Black Lives Matter protesters and supporters of US President Donald Trump, police said.

The Oregon city has been an epicenter of BLM protests since the police killing of unarmed black man George Floyd in Minnesota in late May, and according to local media a "caravan of hundreds of cars" of Trump supporters also converged there on Saturday.

Portland Police tweeted a political rally was "caravanning throughout downtown Portland," adding: "There have been some instances of violence between demonstrators and counter demonstrators. Officers have intervened and in some cases made arrests." *OregonLive* reported "clashes" and "tense moments" between the groups, although police did not say whether the shooting was related to the demonstrations.

The shooting occurred at around 8:45pm downtown, police said later in a statement, adding a homicide investigation was under way.

"Portland Police officers heard sounds of gunfire from the area of Southeast 3rd Avenue and Southwest Alder Street," the statement said. — *AFP*

TRUMP TO VISIT KENOSHA IN WAKE OF RACIAL UNREST

Washington, Aug. 30: President Donald Trump will travel next week to the Midwestern city where African American Jacob Blake was shot multiple times in the back by a white policeman, sparking a nationwide wave of protest, the White House said.

Trump will meet police in Kenosha, Wisconsin on Tuesday and "survey damage from recent riots" triggered by Blake's shooting last weekend, administration spokesman Judd Deere said. Blake took at least half a dozen shots in the back in front of his small children as he tried to get into a car, in an incident that triggered an outpouring of anger over yet another shooting of a black man by white police.

Deere did not say if Trump would meet the family of Blake, who was left paralyzed from the waist down. Protesters have taken to the streets nationwide this summer over the killing of black men by police, including George Floyd in Minneapolis in May.

Trump has characterised the mostly-peaceful activists as vicious rioters as he presses a law and order message while fighting an uphill battle for re-election in November. — *AFP*

Protesters storm Reichstag during mass Covid protest

Around 300 people were arrested in scuffles with police

Berlin, Aug. 30: German leaders on Sunday condemned the "unacceptable" attempt by protesters to storm the Reichstag parliament building during a mass rally against coronavirus restrictions.

Some of the protesters on Saturday carried the flag of the former German Reich which was used up until the end of the First World War.

"Flags from the Reich and far-right profanity in front of the German parliament are an unacceptable attack on the heart of our democracy," President Frank-Walter Steinmeier said on Instagram. "We will never accept this".

Police said some 38,000 people, double the number expected, had gathered in Berlin on Saturday to protest restrictions imposed to curb the spread of the Coronavirus, such as the wearing of masks and social distancing.

Late Saturday, several hundred broke through barriers and a police cordon to climb the steps leading to the entrance to the Reichstag.

About 300 people were arrested in front of the Reichstag and following an incident at the Russian embassy, according to police.

They were narrowly prevented from entering the building by police, who used pepper spray and arrested several people.

Police initially appeared overwhelmed, as only a handful of officers were there to block the crowd.

"We cannot be present everywhere and it is precisely these weaknesses in the deployment that were exploited, in this case to cross the security barriers in order to reach the steps of the Reichstag," said local police spokesman Thilo Cablitz.

The Reichstag, where German deputies meet, has a powerful symbolic role in the country. The building, with its famous dome, was burnt down by the Nazis in 1933 in an act aimed at destroying what remained of German democracy between the two world wars. — *AFP*

Police officers remove a large portrait of Indian political ethicist and civil disobedience advocate Mahatma Gandhi at an unregistered demonstration against government Coronavirus regulations held next to the Siegesaeule, or Victory Column, in Berlin, Germany on Sunday. — *AFP*

BEN CRUMP, ADVOCATE FOR VICTIMS

Washington, Aug. 30: When angry protesters shout the names of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor or Jacob Blake —Ben Crump is listening. He is the seemingly omnipresent black attorney representing the families of all those emblematic victims of US police violence, and others too.

On Friday, he joined thousands of protesters in Washington at a rally denouncing discriminatory policing and demanding fairness in the justice system.

It is a cause Crump has ardently embraced, whether in courtrooms or before television cameras. Crump has repeatedly found himself in the spotlight following high-profile cases of violence against African Americans: the vigilante killing of jogger Ahmaud Arbery, the death of George Floyd under the knee of a Minneapolis police officer and now the grievous wounding of Jacob Blake by a policeman in Wisconsin who repeatedly shot him in the back. — *AFP*

Zuckerberg: Facebook erred in not removing militia page's post

Washington, Aug. 30: Facebook made a mistake in not removing a militia group's page earlier this week that called for armed civilians to enter Kenosha, Wisconsin, amid violent protests after police shot Jacob Blake, CEO Mark Zuckerberg says.

The page for the Kenosha Guard violated Facebook's policies and had been flagged by a bunch of people, Zuckerberg said in a video posted on Friday on Facebook. The social media giant has in recent weeks adopted new guidelines removing or restricting posts from groups that pose a threat to public safety.

Facebook took down the page Wednesday, after an armed civilian allegedly killed two people and wounded a third Tuesday night amid protests in Kenosha that followed the shooting of Blake, who man of colour.

It was largely an operational mistake, Zuckerberg said. The contractors, the reviewers, who the initial complaints were funneled to, didnt, basically didnt pick this up.

Zuckerberg did not apologize for the error and said that so far, Facebook hasn't found any evidence that Rittenhouse was aware of the Kenosha Guard page or the invitation it posted for armed militia members to go to Kenosha.

Facebook is now taking down posts that praise the shooting or shooter, Zuckerberg said. Yet a report on Thursday by The Guardian newspaper found examples of support and even fundraising messages still being shared on Facebook and its photo-sharing service, Instagram.

Zuckerberg also contrasted the treatment of Blake, who was shot in the back by Kenosha police, and the white 17-year-old now charged in Tuesday's slayings, Kyle Rittenhouse, who carried an AR-15-style rifle near police without being challenged. Zuckerberg also acknowledged the civil rights demonstration on Friday in Washington, D.C. — *AP*

Joe Biden

BIDEN: WON'T USE MILITARY AS 'PROP'

Washington, Aug. 30: Joe Biden said on Saturday that as president, he would never use the military "as a prop or private militia" and accused President Donald Trump of employing US forces to settle "personal vendettas" and violate citizens' rights.

The Democratic presidential nominee, in a virtual address to the National Guard Association of the United States' general conference, said Trump recommended "that you should be deployed to quote, 'dominate,' your fellow citizens for exercising their right to peacefully protest."

"We're so much better than this," Biden said. "You deserve so much better." His comments came a day after Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told Congress that the armed forces will have no role in carrying out the election process or resolving a disputed vote.

It was a sign of rising tensions on both sides as the president has declared without evidence that the expected surge in mail-in ballots during the coronavirus pandemic will make the vote "inaccurate and fraudulent." Trump has also suggested he might not accept the election results if he loses.

Biden has said he's "absolutely convinced" the military would escort Trump from the White House if the incumbent lost but refused to leave. — *AP*

Ashraf Ghani

AFGHAN PREZ NAMES COUNCIL FOR PEACE DEAL

Kabul, Aug. 30: Afghanistan's president has appointed a council for national reconciliation, which will have final say on whether the government will sign a peace deal with the Taliban after what are expected to be protracted and uncertain negotiations with the insurgents.

The negotiations were envisaged under a US - Taliban peace agreement signed in February as intra-Afghan talks to decide the war-torn country's future. However, their start has been hampered by a series of delays that have frustrated Washington. Some had expected the negotiations to begin earlier this month.

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani issued a decree late Saturday establishing the 46-member council, led by his former rival in last year's presidential election, Abdullah Abdullah, who is now in the government.

The council is separate from a 21-member negotiating team, which Ghani appointed in March and which is expected to travel to the Gulf Arab state of Qatar, where the Taliban maintain a political office, for intra-Afghan talks.

The council will have the final say and will ultimately decide on the points that the negotiating team takes up with the Taliban. — *AP*

Mass rally against Belarus leader

Minsk, Aug. 30: Tens of thousands of opposition supporters marched through the Belarusian capital of Minsk on Sunday calling for an end to strongman Alexander Lukashenko's rule, despite heavily armed police and troops blocking streets and detaining dozens of demonstrators.

Protests have now entered a third week since the disputed presidential election on August 9 in which Lukashenko claimed victory, while opposition rival Svetlana Tikhanovskaya said she was the true winner.

An *AFP* journalist and local media estimated that more than 1,00,000 people came to Sunday's protest, equalling the scale of the rallies on previous weekends, the largest demonstrations the country has seen since independence from the USSR.

Some protesters gathered around Lukashenko's official residence in the centre of Minsk, the Palace of Independence, which was guarded by a cordon of riot police and special forces with helmets and anti-riot shields, equipped with water cannons.

SUNDAY'S RALLY fell on Lukashenko's 66th birthday and online opposition messages urged people to bring flowers and "creative" handmade gifts reflecting their attitude to the authoritarian leader.

Sunday's rally fell on Lukashenko's 66th birthday and online opposition messages urged people to bring flowers and "creative" handmade gifts reflecting their attitude to the authoritarian leader.

Some chanted "Get out! We're coming for you on your birthday!" Others held quirky items aloft including a cardboard model toilet with a sign urging Lukashenko to "flush" himself away. Others carried a model coffin with "Dictatorship" written on the side and a picture of a giant cockroach, the nickname used by the opposition for Lukashenko. — *AFP*

Global virus cases top 25 mn, Brazil's toll crosses 1,20,000

New Delhi, Aug. 30: Global Coronavirus infections soared past 25 million on Sunday, as countries around the world further tightened restrictions to try to stop the rampaging pandemic.

A million additional cases have been detected globally roughly every four days since mid-July, with India on Sunday setting the record for the highest single-day rise in cases with 78,761.

The surge in India, home to 1.3 billion people, came as the government further eased lockdown restrictions on the weekend to help ease pressure on the reeling economy.

Even nations such as New Zealand and South Korea, which had previously brought their outbreaks largely under control, are now battling new clusters of infections.

On the other side of the world, Latin America — the worst-hit region — was still struggling with its first wave, with Covid-19 deaths in Brazil crossing 1,20,000, second only to the United States.

Brazil's curve "has stabilised now, but at a very dangerous level: nearly 1,000 deaths and 40,000 cases per day," said Christovam Barcellos, a researcher at public health institute Fiocruz.

"And Brazil still isn't past the peak."Nearly 8,43,000 people have died of Covid-19 globally, and with no vaccine or effective treatment available yet, governments have been forced to resort to some form of social distancing and lockdowns to stop the spread of the virus. — *AFP*

Shias mark Ashura in Iraq's amid virus

Karbala, Aug. 30: Thousands of tearful Shias Muslim pilgrims wearing gloves and masks flooded Iraq's holy city of Karbala on Sunday to mark Ashura, in one of the largest religious gatherings of the Coronavirus era.

Ashura, on the 10th day of the mourning month of Muharram, commemorates the killing of the Prophet Mohammed's grandson Hussein at the Battle of Karbala in 680 AD — the defining moment of Islam's confessional schism.

Typically, millions of Shiites from around the world flock to the city's golden-domed shrine where Hussein's remains are buried, to pray and cry, shoulder-to-shoulder.

But with Coronavirus numbers spiking across the globe, this year's commemoration has been subdued.

"Honestly, this year is nothing like the millions-strong commemorations of other years," said Fadel Hakim, who was out early in the streets around the shrine, a blue medical mask cupping his chin. — *AFP*

HEZBOLLAH CHIEF SAYS OPEN TO NEW LEBANON PACT

Beirut, Aug. 30: Hezbollah chief Hasan Nasrallah on Sunday said that his Shiite movement is "open" to a French proposal for a new political pact for Lebanon as long as there is national consensus.

"On his latest visit to Lebanon, we heard a call from the French president for a new political pact in Lebanon... today we are open to a constructive discussion in this regard," Nasrallah said in a speech.

"But we have one condition: this discussion should be carried out... with the will and consent of the various Lebanese factions."

Nasrallah did not elaborate on what kind of changes his movement was willing to consider but cited criticsm from "official French sources" over Lebanon's "sect-based political system and its inability to solve Lebanon's problems and respond to its needs."

Lebanon recognises 18 official religious sects and its 128 parliamentary seats are divided equally between Muslims and Christians, an arrangement unique in the region.

However, governments born out of this system have been prone to deadlock and have failed to meet popular demands for better living conditions.

Macron, the first world leader to visit Lebanon after the devastating August 4 Beirut port blast, will return on Monday to press for reform and reconstruction. On his earlier visit days after the blast, the French president said Lebanese leaders had a "huge" responsibility: "that of a revamped pact with the Lebanese people in the coming weeks, that of deep change."

SAD | DEMISE

Writer's stories explored the experience of being a man of colour and gay life in prose

Famous author Randall Kenan dies at 57

Chapel Hill (US), Aug. 30: Randall Kenan, an author whose stories explored the experience of being a man of colour and gay in the American South, has died. He was 57.

The University of North Carolina, where Kenan taught as an English professor, confirmed his death on Saturday.

A cause was not immediately available, Daniel Wallace, his friend and colleague at the university, said Kenan was found dead Friday at his home in Hillsborough, near Chapel Hill.

"He was just an immense talent. His best years were ahead of him," Wallace said, noting that his most recent book, If I Had Two Wings, was published just this month.

"And he was a gentleman of the old school" who never failed to bring flowers or chocolate to Wallace's wife when he would visit the couple.

Randall Kenan

Kenan grew up in North Carolina and attended UNC, receiving his undergraduate degree in 1985.

EARLIER THIS month, Kenan wrote an open letter reflecting on his experience as a Black student at UNC in the '80s, and the changes prompted by civil unrest, demands for racial justice and the removal of Confederate statues across the South.

His 1992 collection of short stories, Let the Dead Bury Their Dead, was set in the fictional town of Tim's Creek, North Carolina. It received critical acclaim and was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award.

He also wrote a young adult biography of author James Baldwin.

Earlier this month, Kenan wrote an open letter reflecting on his experience as a Black student at UNC in the '80s, and the changes prompted by civil unrest, demands for racial justice and the removal of Confederate statues across the South.

"For me — a poor coloured boy from the swamps of Eastern North Carolina — the Civil War was far from a lost cause, let alone a done war. I had underestimated how unfinished," he wrote. — *AP*

IN BRIEF

3-yr-old safe after being lofted by kite

Taipei: A 3-year-old girl in Taiwan was reported safe after becoming caught in the strings of a kite and lifted several meters into the air. The unidentified girl was taking part in a kite festival Sunday in the seaside town of Nanlioao when she was caught up by a giant, long-tailed orange kite. Video shot at the scene showed her twisting several times above a crowd of adults who struggled to pull the kite back to earth. News reports said the girl was frightened but suffered no physical injuries in the incident.

No swimming in river with crocodile

Berlin: Authorities in eastern Germany have banned swimming in parts of the river Unstrut after claims that a crocodile was seen there. Officials in Burgenland county, about 185 kilometers (115 miles) southwest of Berlin, said late on Saturday that the ban would remain in place until Sept. 6. Extensive searches for the reptile have so far produced no evidence of its existence, they said. Residents, boats users and cyclists traveling along the Unstrut were asked to report any further sightings to authorities. Crocodiles are not native to Germany or any other part of Europe.

Scientists calculate earth's ice age temp

Washington: Guided by ocean plankton fossils and climate models, scientists have calculated just how cold it got on Earth during the depths of the last Ice Age, when immense ice sheets covered large parts of North America, South America, Europe and Asia. The average global temperature during the period known as the Last Glacial Maximum from roughly 23,000 to 19,000 years ago was about 46 degrees Fahrenheit (7.8 degrees Celsius), some 13 degrees Fahrenheit (7 Celsius) colder than 2019, the researchers said on Wednesday. Certain regions were much cooler than the global average, they found. The polar regions cooled far more than the tropics, with the Arctic region 25 degrees Fahrenheit (14 degree Celsius) colder than the global average.

France suspends bird hunting practice

Paris: Macron decided to suspend the practice for the current hunting season pending a final decision of the European Court of Justice on the practice. Last year, there had been a quota of 42,000 birds. In July, the European Commission urged France to "reexamine" the method of catching birds, which activists have called "barbaric". Birds captured by glue hunting are caged and used as "callers" to attract others for shotgun hunting trips. After they are trapped in the glue, they are washed with chemicals to remove the sticky goo. Environmentalists say that 150,000 birds die annually from non-selective hunting techniques such as glue traps and nets at a time when Europe's bird population is free-falling.

EXPERTS: PAK LACKS MODERN FLOOD WARNING SYSTEM

Islambad, Aug. 30: Pakistan has neither an effective telemetry system nor modern weather forecast radars for timely prediction of flooding, the national disaster management agency has said, as seasonal torrential rains claimed 134 lives and injured 81 others in the last over two months since the monsoon began in the country.

Every year, Pakistan struggles to cope with the annual monsoon deluge and other rain-related incidents which cause huge loss of life and properties. The monsoon season runs from June-July through September.

Monsoon rains are lashing Pakistan at a time when authorities are trying to contain the spread of the coronovirus, which caused 6,288 deaths since February when the country reported its first case. Nine more people — five in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province and four in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) — died overnight, pushing the nationwide monsoon-related death toll to 134, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) said on Sunday.

Blazing threat

A hydroplane flies over a wildfire in Almonaster la Real in Huelva, Spain. Around 500 people were evacuated and thousands of hectares already burned in a wildfire that began on Thursday in the southern region of Andalusia, in Huelva. — *AP*

Fires ravage Patanal, world' largest wetland

Flames threaten region's biodiversity, pumas and jaguars

Pocone, Brazil, Aug. 30: The world's largest wetland is ablaze, but the fire is often invisible.

In Brazil's Pantanal, the vegetation compacted under the marshy flood water during the wet season dries out as ponds and lagoons evaporate, leaving flammable deposits underground that can continue to smolder long after visible flames die down.

Firefighters across Brazil are battling raging towers of flames from the Amazon rainforest to the Cerrado savannah, but the fires beneath their feet are a particular challenge in the Pantanal. The only way to combat an underground fires is to dig a trench around it, said state firefighter Lieutenant Isaac Wihby.

"But how do you do that if you have a line of fire that's 20 kilometers long? It's not viable," he said.

The fires here are the worst in 15 years. The flames threaten the region's biodiversity, rich with tapirs, pumas, capybaras and the world's most dense population of jaguars.

The Pantanal, whose name derives from the Portuguese word for "swamp," sprawls over more than 1,50,000 sq km in Brazil and also extends into Bolivia and Paraguay.

As fires approached emergency workers in the Pantanal this week, they used tractors to cut through desiccated trees and shrubs, leaving a gash of brown dirt meant to rob the flames of fuel and stop their spread.

But strong winds can send the flames over the top, or underground fires can pass below.

"Sometimes it passes under a firebreak and takes the firefighters by surprise," said Lieutenant Jean Oliveira, who is leading the firefighting efforts.

"Sometimes you control a fire and it's not really dead, it's just sleeping," he said. Hundreds of firefighters, environmental workers, park rangers and soldiers have worked 24 hours a day for weeks attempting to extinguish flames that have destroyed thousands of square kilometers of the Pantanal.

With temperatures soaring above 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit), one fire this week was unstoppable as strong winds pushed it across multiple firebreaks, burning through twisted branches and dry leaves through the day and into the night.

"We controlled it but then it jumped there, jumped there, jumped there," said Edmilson Rodrigo da Silva, a firefighter for Brazil's center-west state of Mato Grosso, pointing far into the distance to where the fire had gotten past firebreaks.

The region is a vast flood plain that normally fills with water during the rainy season, roughly from November to March. But the floods were lower than normal this year and a subsequent drought has left the area dangerously susceptible to fire. — *Reuters*

Brazil reinforces that it will keep fighting deforestation

Brasilia/Poconé, Aug. 30: In a dramatic u-turn, Brazil's Environment Ministry said on Friday it would continue to fight deforestation, reversing its position after saying hours earlier that it could not afford to continue enforcement efforts in the Amazon.

The ministry, through its enforcement arm Ibama and its parks service ICMBio, plays a vital role in combating deforestation with teams deployed on frequently dangerous missions to catch illegal loggers and miners in the world's largest rainforest.

So the original announcement on Friday afternoon that it would cease all operations from Monday came as a shock, especially amid rising deforestation and growing criticism of Brazil's environmental policy from environmental groups as well as international investors. Last year an area about the size of Lebanon was cleared in the Amazon.

THE MINISTRY, through its enforcement arm Ibama and its parks service ICMBio, plays a vital role in combating deforestation with teams deployed on frequently dangerous missions to catch illegal loggers and miners in the world's largest rainforest.

The ministry cited a decision by Brazil's Federal Budget Secretariat (SOF), to block certain funds that had been allocated to Ibama and ICMBio. The ministry said the SOF"s move ultimately was ordered by the office of the chief of staff for right-wing President Jair Bolsonaro.

But vice president Hamilton Mourão, who Bolsonaro has put in charge of Brazil's Amazon response, quickly denied the funds had been pulled. He accused Environment Minister Ricardo Salles of "jumping the gun."

"The minister jumped the gun, and that's not going to happen," he told journalists in Brasilia. "There will not be a blockage of 60 million reais ($11.1 million) dedicated to Ibama and ICMBio." — *Reuters*

Brazil ranch shows best beef forward

Tailandia, Aug. 30: Mauro Lucio Costa wanted to do the right thing for the world's largest rainforest.

For decades, the third-generation rancher in northern Brazil watched guiltily as his industry, feeding soaring global appetite for beef, razed ever more jungle. So, gradually he experimented with grasses and grazing techniques that today make his ranch one of the most efficient in Brazil. Costa became a model for those who believe beef can be raised profitably and sustainably — even in the Amazon.

As a so-called "finishing farm," Costa's ranch is the last stop cattle make in a chain that begins with breeders and often includes stays on a progression of other properties before animals are grown and ready for slaughter.

Eager to do more — and push others in the industry toward sustainability, too — Costa in 2017 decided to buy cattle only from breeders who could prove they weren't ranching illegally cleared land. He asked a consultant to check suppliers' farms for deforestation using satellite maps and a government list of embargoed properties.

After only a year, though, his effort failed.

Nearly half his cattle, Costa realized, came from suppliers who either had environmental violations or whose land titles and other paperwork were so questionable that he couldn't be sure. To see his plan through, he said, he would have been unable to keep his herd populated and produce enough beef to make a profit. — *Reuters*

Trump: Not one complaint about Hurricane response

Lake Charles, Aug. 30: President Donald Trump on Saturday visited Louisiana and Texas, pummeled this week by Hurricane Laura though the storm did not inflict the catastrophic damage and death toll of Hurricane Katrina 15 years ago.

Wearing a red "USA" cap, Trump landed in Lake Charles, a Louisiana city of 80,000 people that's home to petroleum refineries and chemical plants near the Gulf of Mexico.

The president — not wearing a mask despite the Coronavirus epidemic in the United States — toured a neighborhood with downed trees and damaged houses, as well as a warehouse.

FEDERAL EMERGENCY Management Agency (FEMA) has already distributed 2.6 million liters of water and 1.4 million meals, Trump said, as hundreds of thousands of storm victims are without electricity and running water.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has already distributed 2.6 million liters of water and 1.4 million meals, Trump said, as hundreds of thousands of storm victims are without electricity and running water. "I haven't had one complaint," Trump said, congratulating federal and local officials at a news conference at a fire station.

"Louisiana has been through a lot with the Covid and with this, a couple other things. You've done a great job," he told the officials, who included the state's Democratic Governor John Bel Edwards.

Hurricane Laura struck the coast of Louisiana early Thursday as a Category 4 storm, packing winds of 150 miles (240 kilometers) an hour.

It has been blamed for at least 14 deaths in Louisiana and Texas, with more than half of them due to improper use of portable generators, which produce toxic carbon monoxide gas. — *Reuters*

HUNDREDS BRAVE TO SWIM EU'S LONGEST DANUBE RIVER

Budapest, Aug. 30: About 700 adventurous swimmers plunged into the fast-flowing waters of the Danube in Budapest on Saturday, enjoying an unusual view of the city's famous bridges as they swam across the longest river in the European Union.

The event is part of the Budapest Urban Games, an event supported by the municipal government to encourage residents of the Hungarian capital to use the city's parks, roads and waterways as venues for sport.

For the swimmers on Saturday, the biggest challenge was staying within a corridor of boats stretching the 430 metres (470 yards) from one side of the river to the other. "If you try once, you will feel the power of the river, and it's amazing… how strong and fast the river is," said Istvan Kovacs, 50, nicknamed Koko, a former Olympic and world champion boxer who took part in the contest.

"To swim in our beautiful river… it's a great feeling," he told Reuters Television. Organisers allowed only about 20-25 swimmers to be in the water at the same time to ensure safety and social distancing measures were implemented on the embankments due to the Coronavirus.

Boriska Darvai, another participant, said she had found it more difficult to reach the other bank than during last year's event, but "made up her mind" to make it. — *Agencies*

Rescuers search for bodies after a mudslide during heavy flooding in Parwan province, north of Kabul, Afghanistan. — *AP*

Afghan floods kill 160, search for bodies continues

Kabul, Aug. 30: Heavy flooding has killed at least 100 people and injured scores of others as heavy seasonal rains drenched northern and eastern Afghanistan, officials said Wednesday.

Annual heavy rains, compounded by mudslides, often threaten remote areas of Afghanistan, where infrastructure is poor. Summer often brings heavy rainfall in northern and eastern parts of the country, leading to floods that leave hundreds dead every year.

State minister for disaster management Ghulam Bahawudin Jilani said that in northern Parwan province, water inundated the central city of Charikar, where the health ministry said the local hospital was partially destroyed and many of the injured were being transferred to the capital, Kabul.

The provincial spokeswoman, Wahida Shahkar, said the number of casualties may rise as people and rescue teams were still working to locate people buried under destroyed houses. The head of the provincial hospital, Abdul Qasim Sangin, said several children were among the dead and some of the injured are in critical condition.

On a highway just east of Kabul, at least eight people, including two children, drowned and 14 others were injured when the floodwaters swept the cars they were in away, according to spokesman Ahmad Tameem Azimi.

Shahkar said the flooding started in the central part of the province overnight, following heavy rains and destroying many homes. She called on the government to deliver aid and provide immediate support for workers digging through mud to reach those who were trapped. — *AFP*

Experts explain California's wildfires history in decades

California, Aug. 30: California may experience its worst year for wildfires in decades, climate experts say, pointing out that it has already battled two of the three largest blazes in its recorded history during an intense heatwave this month — even before the peak season begins.

Record temperatures have exacerbated the state's ongoing drought and triggered dry-lightning that started more than 700 fires, some in redwood rainforests and Joshua trees that do not normally burn.

Firefighters had a grip on the three largest blazes on Friday in the San Francisco Bay Area but warned residents to prepare for fall winds that typically drive the state's largest fires.

With more than 1.6 million acres blackened this year, climatologist Zach Zobel said California was on track to overtake the nearly 2 million acres burned in 2018, when the state suffered its deadliest wildfire and the most acreage burned in records going back to at least 1987.

"I would be very surprised if we didn't overtake that given the conditions in place," said Zobel an atmospheric scientist who tracks extreme weather for the Woodwell Climate Research Center.

What worries climatologists is not so much the size of California's wildfires, which have long rejuvenated forests and chaparral, but their ferocity. — *AFP*

ARCTIC | MELTS **Arctic has already warmed twice as fast as the rest of the world**

Polluting ships stream into polar waters

London, Aug. 30: As melting sea ice opens the Arctic to navigation, more ships are plying the loosely regulated polar waters, bringing increasing amounts of climate-warming pollution, a Reuters analysis of new shipping and fuel-consumption data shows.

Traffic through the icy region's busiest lane along the Siberian coast increased 58% between 2016 and 2019. Last year, ships made 2,694 voyages on the Northern Sea Route, according to data collected by researchers from the Centre for High North Logistics at Norway's Nord University.

Representational image.

The trade is driven by commodities producers – mainly in Russia, China and Canada – sending iron ore, oil, liquefied natural gas (LNG) and other fuels through Arctic waters.

TRAFFIC THROUGH the icy region's busiest lane along the Siberian coast increased 58% between 2016 and 2019.

Even the Covid-19 pandemic, which has significantly slowed shipping worldwide as supply chains have been disrupted, has not prevented traffic increasing on the Arctic artery.

Ships made 935 voyages in the first half of 2020, up to the end of June, compared with 855 in the same period last year, the data shows.

The increase in shipping is a worry for the environment. As those heavy ships burn fuel, they release climate-warming carbon dioxide as well as black soot.

That soot blankets nearby ice and snow, absorbing solar radiation rather than reflecting it back out of the atmosphere, which exacerbates warming in the region.

The Arctic has already warmed at least twice as fast as the rest of the world over the last three decades. With the region's warming rate increasing in recent years, governments are gearing up for a future of open Arctic waters.

"The driving concern is the reduction of Arctic sea ice and the potential for more shipping," said Sian Prior, lead adviser with the Clean Arctic Alliance. "We are already seeing that happen."

LNG tankers make up the largest proportion of traffic on the Northern Sea Route. They alone burned 2,39,000 tonnes of fuel in 2019, versus only 6,000 tonnes in 2017, according to previously unpublished data collected by the non-profit International Council on Clean Transportation said. — *AP*

TOKYO TRANSPARENT TOILET'S WALLS GO OPAQUE WHEN DOOR CLOSED

Tokyo, Aug. 29: Now you see them, now you don't.

The walls of two newly installed public toilets in Tokyo's Shibuya neighbourhood are see-through before people enter, but turn opaque when the doors are closed and locked from the inside.

The so-called transparent toilets, which opened this month, were designed by award-winning Japanese architect Shigeru Ban for a project organised by The Nippon Foundation that redesigned a total of 17 public toilets in the neighbourhood.

The goal was to make them accessible to anyone, regardless of gender, age or disability.

The see-through walls glow in vibrant colors — green, yellow, orange.

"Maybe I feel a little anxious the first time, like will this work? Is somebody (outside) the glass trying to look inside or something?" Cecilia Lopez, a travel blogger from Argentina, said Thursday. "But I think it's more for the fun of it."

The outer walls of the toilets have a layer of glass that remains clear when hooked up to an electric current. When the door is locked, the current is cut and a special film makes the glass opaque and conceals the users, according to Kana Saji of The Nippon Foundation. — *AP*

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quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	39,467.31	0.90
Nifty 50	11,647.60	0.76
S&P 500*	3,508.01	0.67
Dollar (₹)	73.39	0.58
Pound Sterling (₹)	97.38	0.16
Euro (₹)	87.38	0.00
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	52,155▼252	0.40
Brent crude ($/bbl)*	45.81	00
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.097	-0.050
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.724	00

* As of Friday/Saturday

MF investment in REITs jumps 3-fold to ₹735 cr

Mutual funds have invested Rs 735 crore in REITs in the first six months of 2020, nearly three-fold jump from the year-ago period. However, mutual funds' investment in infrastructure investment trusts (InvITs) dropped by 8 per cent to Rs 4,968 crore during the period, Sebi data showed. MF investment in REITs rose from a mere Rs 7 crore in January 2019 to Rs 71 crore in January this year and to Rs 402 crore in June 2020.

FM to meet bankers on loan recast on Sept. 3

Ahead of the roll out of one-time debt recast for resolution of Coivd-19 related stress in bank loans, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman will hold a review meeting with bankers and heads of NBFCs on Sept. 3 for smooth and speedy implementation of the scheme. "The review (meeting) will focus on enabling businesses and households to avail of the revival framework on the basis of viability..." the finance ministry said.

Fiscal deficit to touch 7% in FY21: Brickwork

India's fiscal deficit is expected to touch 7 per cent of GDP in 2020-21 as against budget estimate of 3.5 per cent, with revenue collections being hit amidst disruptions, says Brickwork Ratings. It expects the economy to gradually pick up from the third quarter of this fiscal. As per the Controller General of Accounts data, the Centre's revenue in Q1 is much lower than collections for the corresponding period last year.

Private firms begin investing in farm sector: Secy

Private companies have began investing in farm sector spurred by the recent reforms that will help increase farmers' income, agriculture secretary Sanjay Agarwal said. The government has already held one round of discussion with the industry on implementation of agri-reforms. "Large number of industries are planning investments, while some have already invested," he said. "Lot of things are happening."

Printed & Published by **K. Sudhakar** on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited, Printed at Deccan Chronicle Press at Deccan Chronicle Holdings Ltd. #563/9/D&9/E, Behind Andhra Bank Pet Basheerbagh, Kompally, Ranga Reddy Dist. Editor: **T.Venkatram Reddy**, RNI Reg No.APENG/2008/24282. © All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission of The Editor, Financial Chronicle ® is prohibited.

■ Bank QIPs help swell inflow to ₹46,600 cr

August FPI inflow hits five-year high

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, AUG. 30

Private banks' huge fund raising through qualified institutional placement (QIP) bloated foreign fund flows to the equity market in August and balanced out outflows from profit taking by domestic mutual funds.

Total foreign portfolio investments stood at Rs 46,602 crore in August so far. This is the highest foreign inflows in a month this year and in the last five years.

It should also be kept in mind that such a large inflow is coming in a world flooded with abundant liquidity and after huge withdrawal by the foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) earlier this year worth Rs 61,973 crore in March and Rs 6,884 crore in April.

In the first half of August, ICICI Bank raised Rs 15,000 crore through QIP. Also, Axis Bank and home loan financier HDFC raised Rs 10,000 crore each through QIPs where both FPIs and domestic institutions were bidders.

FPIs cornered a lion's share of ICICI Bank's QIP; the Government of Singapore was allotted over 46.44 lakh shares comprising 11.08 per cent of the total equity shares issued in the QIP issue. Morgan Stanley Investment Management's Global Opportunity Fund was allotted over 30.63 lakh shares (7.31 per cent of the issue) and Societe Generale got over 23.24 lakh shares, or 5.55 per cent of the issue.

Axis Bank, after close of the QIP, said,"Despite a challenging macro-economic environment, the placement has witnessed strong reception from the global and domestic investor community, including several large foreign portfolio investors, domestic mutual funds and insurance companies."

FPIs shareholding in Axis Bank has gone up from 45.96 per cent as on June 30 to 48.47 per cent as on August 11, as per the updated shareholding data, post-QIP.

In HDFC Ltd's case, Government of Singapore was allotted over 75.96 lakh shares comprising 13.37 per cent of the total equity shares issued in the QIP while another FPI, Invesco Oppenheimer Developing Market Fund was allotted over 31.40 lakh shares comprising 5.54 per cent of the QIP.

ICICI Bank and HDFC are yet to update their shareholding data post-QIP.

BANKS TOLD TO REFUND UPI, RUPAY TRANSACTION CHARGES

New Delhi, Aug. 30: The Income Tax department on Sunday asked banks to refund the charges collected on or after January 1, 2020, on transactions carried out through electronic modes like RuPay cards or BHIM-UPI.

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), in a circular on 'imposition of charge on the prescribed electronic modes under section 269SU of I-T Act', also advised banks not to impose any charges on any future transactions made through these modes.

"Banks are advised to immediately refund the charges collected, if any, on or after January 1," the circular said. *—PTI*

Consumers opting for essentials, not luxury: Nestle

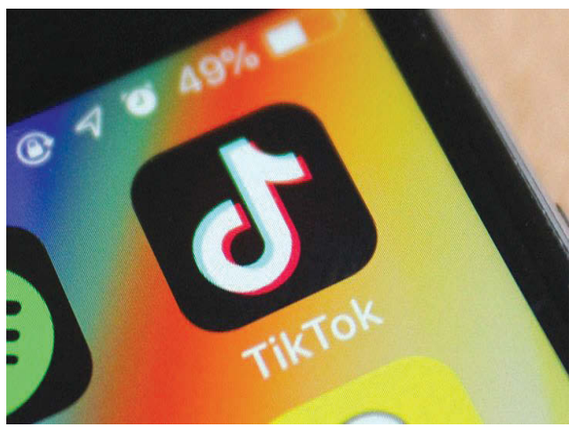
New Delhi, Aug. 30: The pandemic has brought a major shift in consumption patterns among consumers as necessary purchases are taking precedence over luxury spending, Nestl India chairman Suresh Narayanan has said.

Stating that the coronavirus crisis has witnessed "re-calibration of the consumer wallets" amidst economic disruptions, he said certain terms like quality, safety, nutrition and trust have gathered more prominence as consumers are preferring "tried and tested" brands in these uncertain times.

"With the economic pandemic that has followed Covid-19, a re-calibration of the consumer wallets is taking place where essentials are taking precedence over luxuries, however affordable they are," said Narayanan. Moreover, there will also be re-calibration of channels such as e-commerce, which has increased its penetration and prominence among the customers post lockdown, he said.

"If you look at e-commerce channels, in the US what took eight years in terms of penetration, it has been achieved in eight weeks (of lockdown). Clearly the e-commerce journey is here to stay and there will be re-calibration of channels, Narayanan said. *—PTI*

China throws spanner in Trump's TikTok works



Aug. 30: ByteDance Ltd. will be required to seek Chinese government approval to sell the US operations of its short-video TikTok app under new restrictions Beijing imposed on the export of artificial intelligence technologies, according to a person familiar with the matter.

AI interface technologies such as speech and text recognition, and those that analyse data to make personalised content recommendations, were added to a revised list of export-control products published on the Ministry of Commerce's website late Friday. Government permits will be required for overseas transfers to "safeguard national economic security," it said.

The new restrictions cover technologies ByteDance uses in TikTok and will require the company to seek government approval for any deal, according to the person, asking not to be identified because the details aren't public. The new rule is aimed at delaying the sale and is not an outright ban, the person said.

President Donald Trump's administration has said ByteDance must sell the US operations of its popular video-sharing app because of alleged national security risks. Microsoft Corp and Oracle Corp have submitted rival bids to ByteDance to acquire TikTok's US business, while Centricus Asset Management Ltd and Triller Inc were said to have made a last-minute pitch on Friday to buy TikTok's operations in several countries for $20 billion.

China's foreign ministry and commerce ministry did not immediately respond to requests for comment. A ByteDance representative had no immediate comment when reached by Bloomberg.

ByteDance should study the new export list and "seriously and cautiously" consider whether it should halt negotiations, Cui Fan, a trade expert and professor at Beijing's University of International Business and Economics, told the official Xinhua News Agency.

Additional approval in Beijing is likely to delay and could undermine any transaction. Because the Chinese government review will take time, the TikTok deal may be delayed until after the US elections in November, the person familiar said.

The revised rules would cover cross-border transfers of restricted technologies even within the same company, while the impact and consequences of failing to make appropriate applications would be very different if an international business is spun off, Cui said separately in an interview with Bloomberg.

Technologies related to drones and to some genetic engineering methods and procedures were also added to the revised export-control list while others in areas like medical equipment were removed. The revisions are meant to promote China's technological advancement and international cooperation, and "safeguard national economic security," a commerce ministry representative said in a separate statement on Friday.

Technology exports encompass various transfers out of China including via trade, investment and patents, according to the statement. Any export of restricted technology will require letters of export permit intentions from Chinese authorities before negotiations can be held, while final permits are required before any transfer happens. *—Bloomberg*

Biyani gives up after wrestling with debt

New Delhi, Aug 30: Kishore Biyani, considered the pioneer of modern retail in India, taking convenience shopping to the masses, has finally bowed to the winds of change blowing across the sector, giving the control of what he nurtured for over three decades to Reliance Retail.

Kishore Biyani

Biyani (59), who started his business in 1987 by launching Manz Wear which later adopted the brand name of Pantaloon, has on Saturday agreed to hand over the control of his retail empire to new entrant Reliance Retail, a part of Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Industries, in a Rs 24,713-crore deal.

Biyani, a man known for thrifty approach to running the business, has been spreading himself too thin as the need for capital increased to expand his retail business amidst rising competition from new players like Reliance Retail as well as the advent of e-commerce, which he had dismissed as challengers initially.

Many a time he has been forced to divest assets to pare mounting debt of his retail empire, a business which is always considered cash consuming.

In 2012, he sold his majority stake in Pantaloons chain to Aditya Birla Nuvo for Rs 1,600 crore, which included Rs 800 crore of debt transfer. Back in 1992, he had listed Pantaloon on the bourses to raise funds for expansion, store improvements and marketing and from there it was never a look back for him, as he created an entire ecosystem for retail including logistics and also mentored many other entrepreneurs and brands.

Again in 2012, Biyani had also sold a majority stake in Future Capital Holdings to US-based private equity Warburg Pincus to raise funds and exited from a stationery joint venture with US-based Staples by selling its entire stake to the partner.

At that point of time, his group was laden with debt of around Rs 5,000 crore.

Similarly, in 2013 Future Lifestyle Fashion Ltd (FLFL) divested minority stakes in ethnic wear firm Biba Apparels and designer Anita Dongre-owned AND for Rs 450 crore.

In August last year Biyani had sold 49 per cent stake in Future Coupons to Amazon.com NV Investment Holdings.

According to some reports, the debt of Future Group has now reached around Rs 13,000 crore and most shares of the promoter's group are pledged.

When things came to a head, Biyani agreed to a deal on Saturday under which Reliance Retail Ventures Limited, a step down subsidiary of Reliance Industries, will acquire popular Future brand stores such as Big Bazaar, fbb, Foodhall, Easyday, Nilgiris, Central and Brand Factory. *—PTI*

Apparel retailers could see demand rebound in Q4

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, AUG. 30

Apparel retailers will see demand returning to pre-Covid levels by the fourth quarter of this fiscal. However, for the entire fiscal, revenues will be down by 40 to 45 per cent.

In the June quarter, revenues of apparel retailers were less than 20 per cent of the pre-Covid levels, finds India Ratings and Research. Players with exposure in value retail and presence in tier-2 and tier-3 cities were placed better than retailers primarily in metros.

However, the upward sales trend witnessed in June 2020 slowed down by intermittent lock-downs across the country and the pandemic spreading to non-metro cities. Despite about 80 per cent of stores being open as of August, the sector could only witness a slow-but-incremental recovery with the social distancing norms in force, leading to reduced footfalls in stores and prioritisation of spends towards essentials and low-ticket discretionary items amidst a squeeze on income levels. Sales in the quarter remained around 45 per cent of the pre-Covid levels.

As per the Retail Business Survey of Retailers Association of India, July sales of apparel and clothing category were down 69 per cent. Strict lockdown in several states during weekends are crippling the business of retailers.

In the December quarter, Ind-Ra expects a meaningful recovery, driven by the pent-up festive and wedding season demand. However, social distancing norms and a slowing economy will continue to be a drag. Overall, sales may touch around 85 per cent of the pre Covid levels. Consumer behaviour patterns such as revenge buying may also support sales.

By the March quarter, pre-Covid level demand can be achieved, with economic recovery accelerating. The lower base effect from the Covid-hit March quarter of the previous fiscal will also support year-on-year quarterly revenues.

However, for the entire fiscal, the sector revenues may fall 40-45 per cent year-on-year. FY22 will see a sharp recovery with a lower base effect and new store openings. Post-Covid-19, the trend of shift to organised from unorganised would accelerate as small players would find it difficult to sustain operations, given lower footfalls, apprehension among customers related to store hygiene and credit crunch.

UAE scraps Israel boycott to foster ties

MAHER CHMAYTELLI
DUBAI, AUG. 30

The president of the United Arab Emirates scrapped an economic boycott against Israel, allowing trade and financial agreements between the countries in another key step towards normal ties, the UAE's state news agency reported.

Israel and the UAE said on August 13 they would normalise diplomatic relations in a deal brokered by US President Donald Trump that reshapes the order of Middle East politics from the Palestinian issue to the fight against Iran.

President Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan issued a decree abolishing a boycott law as part of "the UAE's efforts to expand diplomatic and commercial cooperation with Israel, leading to bilateral relations by stimulating economic growth and promoting technological innovation," the WAM news agency said on Saturday.

Israeli foreign minister Gabi Ashkenazi said the UAE had taken "an important step towards peace." *— Reuters*

Cheaper diamonds fire life into gem trading

THOMAS BIESHEUVEL
AUG. 30

For the past six months, the global diamond hubs in Antwerp, Belgium and Mumbai have been at a standstill, with cutting and polishing factories closed and trading floors shuttered. Now, a capitulation on prices by the biggest miners is sparking the industry back to life.

After refusing to budge on diamond prices during much of the pandemic, De Beers and Russian rival Alrosa PJSC decided last week they saw enough signs of recovering demand and seized the opportunity, cutting some prices by almost 10 per cent. The impact was instant, as rough diamond buyers snapped up about half a billion dollars in uncut gems, according to people familiar with the situation who asked not to be identified because the information is private.

The resurgence came the same week Tiffany & Co said its jewellery sales were improving monthly, adding to optimism the entire industry is rebounding. The developments will bring relief to a supply chain that's been paralysed since the pandemic hit, with jewellery stores closed, cutters and polishers stuck at home and traders locked out of key producing countries.

"The worst I think is past us and there are reasons to be encouraged," said Stephen Lussier, head of consumer and brands at De Beers. "There is some real consumer data which underlines the midstream's belief that business is coming back for them. The industry is in a healthier place than it has been for some time."

The diamond industry's engine room is dominated by small and private family-run

businesses that cut, polish and trade the stones. They form the invisible link between African mines and jewellery stores in New York, London and Hong Kong. It's a secretive business and goes largely unnoticed outside the closed world of diamonds, but their fortunes are often a bellwether of the wider industry.

"The pipeline has been starved, and people were worried that they would not be able to get their hands on rough, missing out on sales when polished demand comes through," said Anish Aggarwal, a partner at specialist advisory firm Gemdax.

The fortunes of the diamond industry ultimately will be decided by retail demand, and so far that's been patchy. The Chinese market has rebounded strongly, with Chow Sang Sang, one of the country's biggest jewellery retailers, saying its domestic sales as of June were at 95 per cent of last year's levels. That recovery was helped by consumers being unable to travel abroad, where they've traditionally been big buyers in cities such as Hong Kong, London and New York.

Yet US sales, which account for almost half of all diamond demand, remain under pressure as the pandemic keeps shops closed, millions are unemployed and the country posted its biggest quarterly economic contraction since the Great Depression.

De Beers likely sold about $300 million in rough diamonds last week, according to people familiar with the situation. That's less than a traditional sale, but it's the biggest offering since February and amounts to about six times its total sales in the whole second quarter. The company could have sold more but held back some sales to prevent overwhelming the nascent recovery, the people said. Diamond buyers estimate that Alrosa likely sold about $200 million, the people said.

Alrosa chief of sales Evgeny Agureev declined to say how much the company sold.

"In August the rough diamond market showed clear signs of revival after being frozen for several months," he said. It's not yet at pre-pandemic levels though, as "external factors, including international travel restrictions, continue to weigh on negatively on the market," he said.

High-quality diamonds, used as solitaires and for bridal rings, are where demand is strongest, and it was for these type of stones that De Beers cut prices.

It's another story for lower-quality stones, where there is little demand from retailers or traders. De Beers refused to cut prices here, accepting it would sell few stones. The company would have had to lower prices by as much as 20 per cent to find buyers able to make a profit, according to people familiar with the matter.

Yet many diamond traders remain nervous about the strength of any recovery. *— Bloomberg*

SHORT TAKES

I-league helped me: U-17 captain

New Delhi: India's 2017 U-17 World Cup captain Amarjit Singh feels the exposure in the I-League helped him and his teammates of the FIFA show-piece event mature into "better players".

In a live chat with *AIFF TV*, Amarjit described the I-League as the perfect "ladder" in his career.

"After the World Cup, we were provided with a ladder to improve further as a team. After playing for a couple of seasons in I-League I realise how the experiences helped me improve as a footballer," Amarjit said.

"After playing the world cup we got to know that we are participating in I-League that year. It was a great achievement for us. Initially, we were scared as there were teams like Mohun Bagan, East Bengal, Neroca and others. All of them had quality foreign recruits, and we had to compete against them," he added.

Nonetheless, they were extremely excited as they knew the experience of playing in I-League would benefit them in future. — *PTI*

Laszlo to coach Chennaiyin FC

Chennai: Two-time ISL champions Chennaiyin FC on Sunday announced the appointment of experienced Csaba Laszlo as their head coach for the 2020-21 season.

It will be the 56-year-old Hungarian Laszlo's first stint in Asia. He has more than two decades of coaching experience at club and international level. The Romania-born Laszlo had coaching stints in eight countries, including two national teams — Uganda and Lithiania.

Laszlo replaced Owen Coyle, who took the team to the final in the 2019-20 ISL season. Coyle recently moved to Jamshedpur FC as their head coach.

"I am incredibly proud and happy to become the Head Coach of Chennaiyin FC. It is my privilege to join the club on its completion of six successful years. I believe Chennaiyin is a close-knit family-like club that chases excellence with absolutely passionate fans by its side at all times," the Hungarian was quoted as saying in a media release. — *PTI*

Real Salt Lake rally for triumph

Portland, USA: Giuseppe Rossi and Sam Johnson scored late goals and Real Salt Lake rallied for a 4-4 draw with the Portland Timbers in their Major League Soccer match on Saturday night.

Sebastian Blanco scored in the 70th minute to put Portland up 3-2 and Felipe Mora added what appeared to be an insurance goal in the 85th.

But Rossi's first MLS goal in the 90th closed the gap, and Johnson tied it late in stoppage time.

The teams were among those that sat out of Wednesday night's matches to protest racial injustice. Five of six MLS games set for that night were postponed, including Portland's match against the Earthquakes in San Jose, and RSL's match against LAFC.

The next day Real Salt Lake owner Dell Loy Hansen reacted on a local radio show, saying: "The disrespect was profound to me personally. — *AP*

GOLFER ANNA IN LEAD AT ARNKANSAS

Los Angeles: Anna Nordqvist rolled in her ninth birdie at the final hole on Saturday to cap a nine-under par 62 and stretch her lead at the LPGA NW Arkansas Championship to three strokes.

The two-time major champion from Sweden, who shared the overnight lead with Americans Esther Lee and Jackie Stoelting, had a 36-hole total of 16-under par 126.

"I played really solid both today and yesterday," said Nordqvist, who hit all 18 greens in regulation at Pinnacle Country Club in Rogers, Arkansas.

"Got off to a great start," added the Swede, who birdied five of her first six holes. "Had a lot of good opportunities. Made a few putts early and just kept going. Felt like I hit my irons really well," she added. Nordqvist was three shots clear of South Korean Kim Sei-young, who fired an eagle and seven birdies in a seven-under 64. — *AFP*

Arsenal players pose with the English FA Community Shield after defeating Liverpool 5-4 over penalties as the match was tied at 1-1 at the end of speculated time at the Wembley Stadium in London on Saturday. — *AFP*

Gunners get Shield

Aubameyang seals Community glory for Arsenal

London, Aug. 30: Mikel Arteta claimed Arsenal captain Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang is close to signing a new contract after the Gunners beat Liverpool 5-4 on penalties following a 1-1 draw in the Community Shield on Saturday.

Aubameyang put Arteta's side ahead in the first half at Wembley with a typically eye-catching strike.

Japan's Takumi Minamino equalised with his first goal for Liverpool late in the second half of the annual pre-season friendly between the Premier League champions and FA Cup winners.

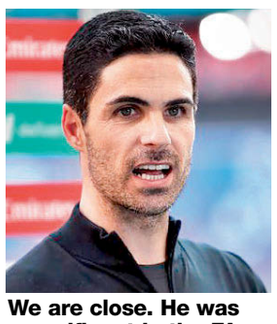
In the shoot-out, Liverpool's young striker Rhian Brewster was the only player to miss, hitting the bar with their third penalty before Aubameyang calmly dispatched the decisive spot-kick.

As if Arteta needed any reminding, it was another sign of the influence wielded by his captain Aubameyang, who is yet to commit his long-term future to the club as he enters the final year.

Gabon forward Aubameyang has kept Arsenal waiting nervously during protracted talks and he demurred when asked in a post-match interview if he was ready to sign the club's contract offer.

"We are going to see, today we will just take the trophy and that is it," he said.

Arteta has remained confident the 31-year-old will stay and he insisted his talisman's status will be resolved to his satisfaction before the Premier League season starts on September 12.



We are close. He was magnificent in the FA Cup final and again today. Big games, big moments, big players. He is responding really well to that kind of pressure.

— MIKEL ARTETA
Arsenal manager on Aubameyang

"We are close. He was magnificent in the FA Cup final and again today. Big games, big moments, big players. He is responding really well to that kind of pressure," Arteta said of the contract.

For Liverpool, it was the second successive season they have lost the Community Shield on penalties after being beaten by Manchester City last term.

Earlier, cutting in from the left to reach Bukayo Saka's pass, Aubameyang was given too much time and space by Williams.

Aubameyang made him pay with a superb curler into the far corner from the edge of the penalty area, celebrating the goal by crossing his arms in tribute to "Black Panther" actor Chadwick Boseman, who died Friday aged 43.

It was Aubameyang's fifth goal for Arsenal at Wembley. — *AFP*

Messi no show for Covid test

Madrid, Aug. 30: In another sign that Lionel Messi's time with Barcelona is coming to an end, the player did not report for required Coronavirus testing scheduled for the whole squad on Sunday.

Barcelona said Messi was the only player who did not undergo the tests at the club's training center. The team is set to resume training on Monday ahead of the upcoming start of the season. The club also reiterated its stance not to negotiate Messi's early release, saying president Josep Bartomeu will only sit down with the player if it is to extend his contract beyond next season.

Messi last week expressed his desire to leave the club, but Barcelona wants him to play out the contract that ends in June 2021. The club also said it is not negotiating a possible transfer with any other team.

Messi announced his decision to leave on Tuesday by sending the club a burofax, a certified document similar to a telegram. He invoked a contract clause that allowed him to leave at the end of the season for free, but the club claims that the clause had already expired.

A legal battle is expected to unfold as Messi will contend that the season was extended beyond the date the clause expired because of the Coronavirus pandemic.

The Argentina great reportedly said he wanted to negotiate with the club, but Barcelona said on Saturday that it was not willing to facilitate his exit. The club said it would like for Messi to finish his career with the Catalan club. — *AP*

ZLATAN TO STAY IN MILAN

Milan, Aug. 30: Zlatan Ibrahimovic is back in Italy and ready to sign a new contract with AC Milan. "Finally everything is in place and finally I can return to where I feel at home. As I've always said, I'm not here to be a mascot. I'm here to bring results and to help the team," Ibrahimovic said upon his arrival at Milan's Linate airport late on Saturday.

The 38-year-old Ibrahimovic is expected to sign a one-season deal worth 7 million euros ($8.3 million). Ibrahimovic began his second stint with Milan in January on a six-month contract and helped turn the Rossoneri's season around with 10 goals in 18 Italian league matches. — *AFP*

DOHERTY TO SPURS DONE

London, Aug. 30: Tottenham on Sunday announced the signing of defender Matt Doherty from Premier League rivals Wolves for an undisclosed fee reported to be 15 million ($20 million).

The 28-year-old Ireland right-back has signed a four-year deal with Spurs and becomes Jose Mourinho's third signing of the transfer window following the arrivals of Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg and Joe Hart.

"We are delighted to announce the signing of Matt Doherty from Wolverhampton Wanderers," Tottenham said on their website. — *AFP*

ROBERT BEST IN GERMANY

Munich, Aug. 30: Polish forward Robert Lewandowski has been voted Germany's "footballer of the year" for helping Bayern Munich to a Champions League, Bundesliga and German Cup treble.

Kicker magazine announced on Sunday that Lewandowski received 276 votes in a poll among sports journalists for the prize, significantly more than his next-placed teammates forward Thomas Muller (54 votes) and defender Joshua Kimmich (49). — *AP*

FORMULA | ONE

89th Grand Prix title for Lewis

Spa- Francorchamps (Belgium), Aug. 30: Lewis Hamilton stretched his lead in the drivers' world championship and closed to within two wins of Michael Schumacher's Formula One record of 91 on Sunday with a majestic, if ultimately tense, Belgian Grand Prix victory.

The series leader and six-time champion registered his 89th career win with another flawless drive to take his fourth Belgian triumph, finishing 8.448 seconds clear of his Mercedes teammate Valtteri Bottas.

It was Hamilton's fifth win in seven races this year and extended his record run of points-scoring races to 40.

Max Verstappen came third for Red Bull, seven seconds further adrift, to claim his sixth podium finish in succession.

Hamilton, who had to nurse his car home on worn tyres, has 157 points in the title race, 47 clear of Verstappen. The 'black arrows' lead the constructors' championship with 264 points, well ahead of Red Bull on 158.

"It wasn't the easiest of races. It was a bit of a struggle, but nonetheless I think it was ok in the end," said Hamilton.

At the British Grand Prix at the start of August, Hamilton had clung on to win after one of his tyres disintegrated.

"I was concerned that we'd have a scenario like Silverstone, but the tyre seemed to have quite a bit of rubber left on it at the finish," he added.

Lewis Hamilton drove flawlessly to to take his fourth Belgian title, finishing 8.448 seconds clear of his Mercedes teammate Valtteri Bottas.

Bottas admitted he could not match his teammate's pace.

"The start was a good opportunity, but Lewis played it really well and I just couldn't catch him. In the same car, with Lewis driving a flawless race, it was really difficult."

Verstappen said he had a dull afternoon.

"It was pretty boring, not very interesting and not much to do," he said.

Daniel Ricciardo produced the fastest lap on his final lap as he claimed fourth ahead of his Renault team-mate Esteban Ocon, and Alex Albon, in the second Red Bull.

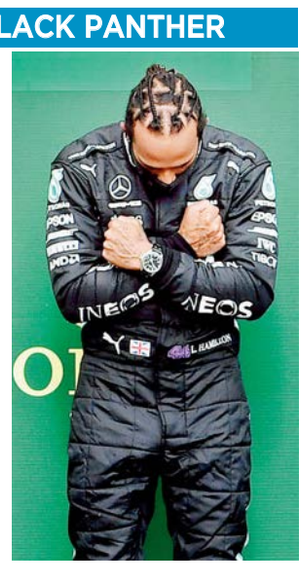
Lando Norris was seventh in the sole McLaren.

Pierre Gasly finished eighth for Alpha Tauri ahead of the Racing Points of Lance Stroll and Sergio Perez. On a troubled weekend, last year's winner Charles Leclerc was 14th, one place behind outgoing Ferrari teammate Sebastian Vettel. — *AFP*

DRIVERS WITH MOST WINS

Rank	F1 Driver	Number of Wins
1	Michael Schumacher	91
2	Lewis Hamilton	89
3	Sebastian Vettel	52
4	Alain Prost	51
5	Ayrton Senna	41

AN ODE TO BLACK PANTHER



Clockwise from bottom left: Lebron James of the Los Angeles Lakers, Arsenal captain Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang and Mercedes driver Lewis Hamilton pay tribute to actor Chadwick Boseman, who lost his battle to colon cancer on Saturday, with his iconic Black Panther pose.

Rory McIlroy with his wife Erica Stoll in this file photo.

Rory to be a father soon

Olympia Fields (USA), Aug. 30: Turns out the lack of fans isn't the only reason Rory McIlroy has struggled to keep his mind on golf. His wife is expecting their first child any day.

McIlroy said he has been sharing the news with friends and family, and then it was disclosed during the *NBC* broadcast on Saturday and he confirmed it after his 3-over 73 that left him three shots behind at the BMW Championship.

"We're around to be parents very soon, so we're obviously super excited," McIlroy said.

"I didn't think it was something that I really particularly needed to share out there. It's a private matter, but we're really excited and can't wait for her to get here."

McIlroy said his caddie and best friend, Harry Diamond, has been keeping the phone in his pocket during the round in case he gets the call.

"And if the call comes, I'm out of here," McIlroy said. — *AFP*

GOLFER TVESA FINISHES TIED 20th IN CZECH

Beroun, Aug. 30: Indian golfer Tvesa Malik cherished her best result outside India with a fine three-under 69 on the final day, finishing Tied-20th at the Tipsport Czech Ladies Open on Sunday.

The 24-year-old Malik, who shot 70-72 on the first two days finished with 69 for a total of 5-under 211.

The result is her best outside India, eclipsing T-27 at Magical Kenya Open in December last year. Her best has been T-6 at Hero Women's Indian Open, also in 2019.

Meanwhile, India's Aditi Ashok brought home a card of three-under 68 to make the cut at the weather-hit Walmart NW Arkansas Championship here.

Aditi was two-under through six holes in the second round when play stopped due to inclement weather but she maintained her calm on resumption. — *PTI*

Bucks enchant Orlando to earn win, Lakers victors

Miami, Aug. 30: The Milwaukee Bucks powered into the second round of the NBA playoffs on Saturday, three days after their refusal to take the court in the wake of a police shooting in Wisconsin brought the post-season to a halt.

Reigning NBA Most Valuable Player Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 28 points and grabbed 17 rebounds and the Bucks led by as many as 21 on the way to a 118-104 victory over the Orlando Magic.

Milwaukee won the best-of-seven Eastern Conference series four games to one to line up a second round clash with the Miami Heat, who swept the Indiana Pacers in four games.

In the Western Conference, Anthony Davis scored 43 points and LeBron James kept his perfect playoff record alive as the Los Angeles Lakers beat Portland 131-122 to clinch their first round series in five games.

Giannis Antetokounmpo of the Milwaukee Bucks dunks during their NBA Playoff game against Orlando Magic in Lake Buena Vista. Bucks won 118-104. — *AP*

James is now a career 14-0 in first round playoff series.

There were signs of rust early from both the Bucks and Magic, who hadn't played since Monday.

Both teams connected on less than 40 perc ent of their shots from the field in the first quarter, but Milwaukee picked up the pace in the second led by Antetokounmpo's 6-of-6 shooting. — *AFP*

India, Russia share gold medal

C. SANTHOSH KUMAR
CHENNAI, AUG. 30

CHESS | OLYMPIAD

Koneru Humpy

In a dramatic turn of events, India and Russia were declared joint winners of the first online chess Olympiad that concluded on Sunday. After the first round ended in a 3-3 draw, the final was poised for a thrilling finish before India's Nihal Sarin and Divya Deshmukh lost their Internet connection and forfeited on time. The match ended 4.5-1.5 in favour of Russia, but Fide, the international ruling body of chess, declared both finalists as joint winners after India filed an appeal.

The event has been hit by a global internet outage throughout and the final day witnessed more drama. Fide president Arkady Dvorkovich said the decision to award gold medals to both teams was made after the Appeals Committee examined all the evidence provided.

"Apart from that, information was gathered from other sources about this internet outage. After being informed of their considerations and in absence of an unanimous decision, and taken into account these unprecedented circumstances, I made the decision," said Dvorkovich.

FIRST GOLD FOR INDIA

It was India's second medal at the Olympiad after their historic bronze at the 2014 edition in Norway. The online edition adopted a unique format with countries fielding mixed teams — men, women and juniors — after the scheduled 44th Olympiad had to be cancelled in Moscow.

The Indian team comprised Vidit Gujrathi (captain), Viswanathan Anand, P. Harikrishna, Koneru Humpy, Dronavalli Harika, R. Vaishali, Bhakti Kulkarni, Nihal Sarin, R. Praggnanand-haa, Aravindh Chithambaram, R. Vaishali, Bhakti Kulkarni, Divya Deshmukh and Vantika Agrawal.

VISHY ENDS OLYMPIAD DROUGHT

For India's chess king Anand, it was his first taste of Olympiad success. He made his Olympiad debut as a teenager in 1984, but a medal had eluded him for more than two decades.

"You can't make this up. It just had to happen and it did after so many twists and turns. It was an unusual end, but we will take it," said the five-time world champion, who didn't have a great tournament.

Anand had opted out of the first match on Sunday, paving the way for P. Harikrishna. Anand returned for the second match and played out a draw against Ian Nepomniachtchi.

Anand credited India's stupendous show to its bench strength. "This format really showcased our strength. We have a good set of juniors. Koneru Humpy and Harika Dronavalli are still going strong. I wanted Harikrishna to play the first match because he brings in a lot of stability. I am glad it worked out," he added.

Humpy was overjoyed as well. "We played tough right through and managed to come back strongly from difficult situations many a time during the tournament. It's been a great run and an outstanding team effort. It's a big win since more than 150 countries were in the fray," the 33-year-old said.

She cherished two key turns. "To beat China in the preliminary rounds showed the strength of the team. Then, with the scores level in the semifinal against Poland, I was chosen to play the tie-breaker and beat Monika Socko in a tense game," she said.

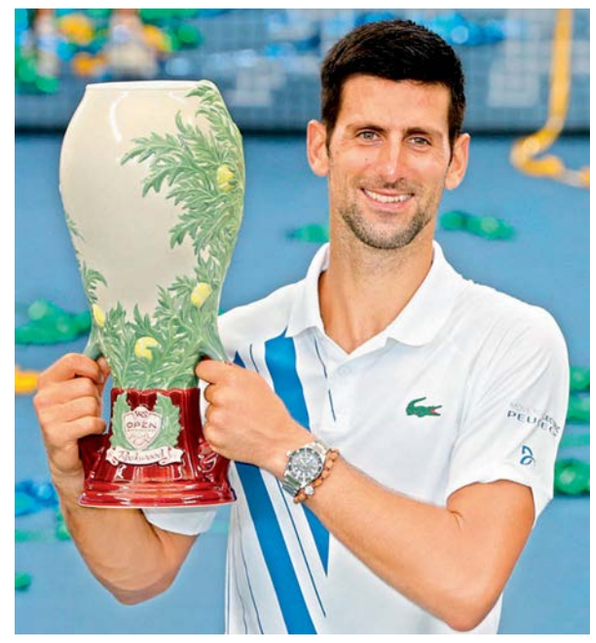
Humpy said it took some adjustment to play the tournament online. "We are not used to playing online chess tournaments. The players are connected through a video call with the organisers watching every move. The player has to be alone in the room with no electronic devices allowed. Every day after the game, we would discuss strategy over video calls. It was a bit strange," she said.

'NEW START' FOR INDIAN CHESS

The event created a lot of buzz online with more than 60,000 people watching the live analysis on chessbaseindia.com.

Anand said the support was amazing. "It was fantastic to see such interest. An unusual opportunity has opened up for chess in this pandemic."

Anand believes India's Olympiad success will change the public perception of chess.


Novak Djokovic of Serbia poses with the winner's trophy after defeating Milos Raonic of Canada in the men's singles final of the Western & Southern Open at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in the Queens borough of New York City on Saturday. — *AFP*

Djokovic, Serena eye Grand Slam

New York, Aug. 30: The US Open becomes the first Grand Slam of the Covid-19 era when it starts Monday in a spectator-free bubble at Flushing Meadows following a troubled build-up that saw several top stars withdraw over Coronavirus fears.

Novak Djokovic and Serena Williams headline a tournament that will be unrecognisable from previous Slams due to strict safety protocols that were still not enough to convince some of tennis's biggest names to travel to New York.

Defending champion Rafael Nadal and women's number one Ashleigh Barty are among high-profile absentees at the US National Tennis Center, which just months ago was transformed into an emergency coronavirus field hospital. Raucous crowds are a hallmark of the US Open, but this the cavernous Arthur Ashe Stadium will be eerily empty to mitigate the risk of infection from the deadly pandemic that has wiped out much of the tennis season, including Wimbledon.

The players are being kept in a tightly controlled environment with regular Covid-19 testing throughout the tournament. Any competitor who tests positive once the event has started will be automatically withdrawn. — *AFP*

NOVAK BAGS 35th TROPHY IN NEW YORK

New York, Aug. 30: For all that's been on Novak Djokovic's plate of late including a painful neck and his efforts to start a new players' association in men's tennis he just keeps winning.

He's perfect in 2020, an ideal way to head into the US Open.

Djokovic tied Rafael Nadal's record by earning his 35th title at a Masters 1000 tournament, overcoming a sluggish start to beat Milos Raonic 1-6, 6-3, 6-4 in the Western & Southern Open final Saturday and improve to 23-0 this season.

"Has been challenging mentally and emotionally for me to stay sane and be able to compete on the highest level and win this title," Djokovic said.

Djokovic, 11-0 head-to-head against 2016 Wimbledon runner-up Raonic, goes into the U.S. Open as the No.1 seed and a big favorite.

"What is that, 23-0?" Raonic said playfully during the trophy ceremony.

"Honestly, if I start the year off 3-0, I'm pretty happy," he added. — *AP*

Kohli & Co. sweat it out at the nets

Royal Challengers Bangalore captain Virat Kohli during the team's first practice session in Dubai on Saturday.

Dubai, Aug. 30: Indian captain Virat Kohli admitted he was "pretty scared" to hit the nets for the first time in five months but said his first training session ahead of the upcoming IPL went "better than expected".

The Royal Challengers Bangalore captain resumed training after a five-month coronavirus-forced hiatus. The net session was also attended by South African pace legend Dale Steyn and RCB team director Mike Hesson.

"(It went) much better than expected, to be honest. I was pretty scared. I hadn't picked up a bat for five months, but yeah it came out better than I thought, to be honest," Kohli was quoted as saying by the franchise's website.

The 31-year-old, who was RCB's highest run-getter in IPL last year, said staying fit during the lockdown helped him to react better during the net session even though he was training after a long break.

"I've trained quite a bit during the lockdown, so I'm feeling quite fit and that helps. Because the body is light and you react better, I feel like I have more time on the ball. That's a big plus," he said.

"Otherwise you come heavier into the season, the body isn't moving as much, and it starts playing on mind, but yeah, as I said it went much better than I expected."

Besides Kohli, spin trio of Yuzvendra Chahal, Washington Sundar and Shahbaz Nadeem and a few pacers also trained and Kohli was pleased with the way they went about their business in the first session. — *PTI*

Captain Iyer demands consistency from team

Dubai, Aug. 30: Terming the upcoming IPL one of his "most important assignments" as captain, Delhi Capitals' Shreyas Iyer has demanded consistency from all his teammates.

In the last edition, Delhi Capitals reached the IPL play-offs for the first time in seven years, and they are hoping to better that result this time. "It's certainly very different from last season, but challenges excite me," Iyer told *IPLT20.com*.

"As a captain, this is going to be certainly one of my most important assignments just because of how different the setting is. It is going to be very different, the key is to take it one day at a time.

● In the last edition, Delhi Capitals reached the IPL play-offs for the first time in seven years, and they are hoping to better that result this time.

"We're being briefed about the do's and don'ts at every step, it's crucial that everyone who is part of our team bubble follows that."

Moved out of India due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 13th edition of the world's biggest T20 league will be played across three venues in the UAE from September 19 to November 10.

"All pieces of the puzzle need to fall in the right place to be a champion team," he said.

"But the IPL is a long tournament and results keep going up and down invariably.

The one thing that worked for us last season for how in each and every match, different players stepped up to the occasion and that was crucial to our success and will be key this year too. Having not just one consistent performer but many of them." — *PTI*

MORGAN, MALAN SCRIPT ENGLAND VICTORY IN T20

Manchester, Aug. 30: England beat Pakistan by five wickets to win the second Twenty20 international here on Sunday.

Eoin Morgan, the England captain, came in on a hat-trick but hit a dashing 66 and shared a third-wicket stand of 112 with Dawid Malan (54 not out) as the hosts chased down a stiff target of 196 with five balls to spare.

Earlier, Pakistan's 195-4 featured fine fifties from Mohammad Hafeez (69) and skipper Babar Azam (56). Victory put England 1-0 in a three-match contest. — *AFP*

Brief scores: Pakistan 195/4 in 20 overs (M. Hafeez 69, Babar Azam 56) vs **England 199/5 in 19.1 overs** (Eoin Morgan 66, Dawid. Malan 44 n.o., Shadab Khan 3/34).

COVID POSITIVE PAIRE REMOVED FROM OPEN

New York, Aug. 30: France's Benoit Paire was removed from the US Open men's draw on Sunday after the Grand Slam tournament announced an unidentified player had been withdrawn after testing positive for Covid-19.

Paire's name was removed from the US Open website's official draw and replaced with that of 149th-ranked Spaniard Marcel Granollers, who is set to face Poland's 108th-ranked Kamil Majchrzak in a first-round match next week.

French sports daily *L'Equipe* had earlier reported that World No.22 Paire had tested positive for Coronavirus in New York.

The US Tennis Association said the asymptomatic player has been advised to follow state and tournament health and safety protocols requiring isolation for at least 10 days.

Contact tracing has been initiated to determine if anyone else must quarantine for 14 days as a result of being around the player involved.

L'Equipe said fellow French players Richard Gasquet, Gregoire Barrere, Edouard Roger-Vasselin and Adrian Mannarino have been confined to their hotel rooms at the tournament until further notice. — *AFP*

In just 10 days alarm bells started ringing in IPL bubble

Hemant Kenkre
Silly Point

"Double, double, toil and trouble; Fire burn, and cauldron bubble!" As kids we always had a problem when it came to reciting this famed line from the Shakespearean tragedy Macbeth as the last word (bubble) always replaced double. By a strange irony, the happenings in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) where the Indian Premier League (IPL) is to kick off in three weeks from now, there seems to be a bit of a burst in the bubble; very different from what the three witches had chanted in the Bard's play.

In just ten days (from when the teams playing the IPL landed in the desert country) the alarm bells started to ring when part of the contingent of Chennai Super Kings (CSK) were tested Covid positive, two of them being players. As if that was not enough, Suresh Raina, an iconic player who sports the yellow jersey pulled out of the edition and flew back to India citing personal reasons.

This will be the first (of the thirteen) edition without the 33-year old middle order batman who has been the perfect foil to skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni, helping in making CSK a champion team. While no official statement giving specific reasons for Raina's departure has been issued barring a standard response from the team management that offered complete support to him and his family, one respects the effervescent cricketer's personal decision and leaves it at that.

With members testing positive, whatever plans that team CSK may have had of stepping out of their forced confines will need to be reviewed, effectively throwing a spanner in their works. Coming out after a five month hiatus and being thrown, once again, in severe lock down situation with zero human contact is going to be a big test for the players who are raring to step out on the grassy field.

Those who have been given the privilege to travelling to the UAE with their families are fortunate unlike the others who will have to rest content staring at the same view out of their hotel rooms for a week to do so. The rules of confinement, set for the IPL, are very stringent and any deviation can lead to further isolation as was found out by England pacer Jofra Archer who broke the bio security bubble during the recently concluded Test series against the West Indies.

With quarantine rules being different in the three Emirates — Dubai, Sharjah and Abu Dhabi — the plans for teams change depending on where they are based. Unlike in Dubai and Sharjah, which have a 7-day quarantine, Abu Dhabi has an isolation period of 14-days which entails a further delay of a week for two teams, Kolkata Knight Riders and Mumbai Indians who are camping there.

With multiple medical tests and strict guidelines to ensure that no member, player or otherwise, crosses the lines marked by the bio security bubble, the endurance and patience of all contingents will be severely tested.

Apart from monitoring the movements of players and support staff, team managements are tasked with the all important effort to keep everyone in good spirits and in a positive frame of mind. The IPL is a high powered tournament in which a big role is played by maintaining the mental balance of team members and keep them from succumbing to pressure which can make or break the sides.

By organising the IPL in these trying times, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) have taken up a challenge which is unprecedented in the history of cricket. Managing eight teams, replete with 20-plus players along with the support and administrative staff is a mind blowing exercise which the BCCI is confident of pulling off. Teams apart, handling an entire ecosystem of affiliates and partners (broadcast and more) for 80 plus days under harsh guidelines is going to be a thankless and ground breaking effort.

With just two weeks before the tournament begins, the cases affecting CSK have given the BCCI a mini preview of the tough demands that lie ahead. These are testing times for the BCCI which has a huge task on hand, one that can enhance or sully their reputation after having taken on a mammoth challenge. The obvious pun inserted in the statement will probably cause the naysayers to guffaw but the organisers who are currently running the show are certainly not in the mood for a laugh. They will be on double shifts to ensure that the bubble does not burst and the league stays out of trouble.

SHORT TAKES

Shooters to train from Wednesday

New Delhi: The Sports Authority of India on Sunday announced that the developmental group of shooters will be allowed to use its facilities from next month with the central government further easing lockdown restrictions under its Unlock 4 guidelines.

The SAI said shooters of Target Olympic Podium scheme and those at the National Centre of Excellence (NCOE) at the Karni Singh Shooting Range here will begin training from September 2. The SAI said guidelines of the Health Ministry and its own Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) will be followed strictly during training of the developmental group of athletes.

"As India enters Unlock 4, SAI has decided to open up its facilities for Developmental Group athletes," the SAI said.

The SAI said the decision to open up sporting facilities in a phased manner has been taken to ensure that safety and training continuity of athletes can move hand-in-hand. — *PTI*

Kulkarni wants to be Mumbai coach

Mumbai: Former wicket-keeper Sulakshan Kulkarni has applied for the job of the Mumbai Ranji Trophy coach, according to sources.

The Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA) had invited applications for various positions, including that of the senior men's coach, selectors and other coaches.

However, it is learnt that another former Mumbai wicket-keeper batsman Vinayak Samant, who coached the domestic giants for the last two seasons, hasn't applied for the job. The MCA Cricket Improvement Committee (CIC) comprising former India players Lalchand Rajput, Raju Kulkarni and Sameer Dighe are expected to informally meet Mumbai Apex Council members on Monday to discuss the matter.

Kulkarni, a familiar name in domestic circuit, has coached Mumbai for three seasons in the past. — *PTI*

Byron wins, in NASCAR playoffs

Daytona Beach, USA: William Byron snaked his way through a smoky crash at Daytona International Speedway and narrowly avoided another melee a few laps later.

Those moves got him to victory lane for the first time in his young NASCAR Cup Series career and back in the playoffs for the second consecutive season. They also helped knock out Hendrick Motorsports teammate Jimmie Johnson, a seven-time series champion whose final season won't end with another title.

Winless in 120 races, Johnson made a trip to victory lane to congratulate Byron and the No.24 team, the one now directed by Johnson's former and long-time crew chief, Chad Knaus.

"It's a big win for Chad Knaus and William Byron," Johnson said. — *AP*

Kristoff shines in Tour de France

Nice, France: After a late pile-up on Nice's iconic Promenade des Anglais, Alexander Kristoff of UAE Emirates won a crash-marred opening stage of the Tour de France on Saturday.

The Norwegian will now wear the overall race leader's yellow jersey, having fought back from an early fall that looked like ruling him out.

The 2020 Tour set off two months later than planned due to the Coronavirus and under strict health protocols.

However, the first rain in the Mediterranean city since June turned the opening jaunt of the 21-day race into a lottery with one motorbike race official describing the road surface as an ice rink.

British team Ineos were left to fret over their Russian climber Pavel Sivakov, who fell twice, riding with both elbows bloodied. — *AFP*

Live on TV

TENNIS

US Open
First round matches from 8.30 pm on Star Sports Select 1, HD

Regd. No. H/SD/509/2018-20
Printed and Published by **K. Sudhakar** on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited. Printed at Deccan Chronicle Press situated at Plot No. 9 Alwal Village, Vallabh Nagar Taluk, Medchal Malkajgiri Dist. Telangana and Published at 36, S.D. Road, Secunderabad-3.
RNI Registration No. 3081/1957.
Editor: **Aditya Sinha**