

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
HYDERABAD | MONDAY | 3 AUGUST 2020

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WEATHER

Max: 33.6°C
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RH: 71%
Rainfall: Nil
Forecast: Cloudy sky, moderate rains likely.
Max/Min temp. 33/24°C

COVID-19 COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+53,202)	(+759)
18,04,258	38,158

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+1,891)	(+10)
TS: 66,677	540
(+8,555)	(+67)
AP: 1,58,764	1,474

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

1,81,30,612
DEATHS
6,90,678
COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES
213

worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana
Titthi: Sravana Shuddha Purnami till 9.31 pm
Star: Uttarashada till 7.19 am
Varjyam: 11.27 am to 1.07 am
Durmuhurtam: 12.48 pm to 1.39 pm; 3.21 pm to 4.12 pm
Rahukalam: 7.30 am to 9 am
HURI CALENDAR
Zuhijja 12,1441 AH
PRAYERS
Fajar: 4.50 am
Zohar: 12.32 pm
Asar: 4.50 pm
Maghrib: 6.54 pm
Isha: 8.07 pm
SUNSET TODAY 6.48 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.56 AM
MOONRISE TODAY -
MOONSET TOMORROW 5.22 AM

COUNTER POINT



Earning money from scams is an old trend... now, they can sell themselves!

IN BRIEF

Nepal's water sinks 60 villages

Bahraich: Over 60 villages in Uttar Pradesh's Bahraich district have been inundated following the release of water by Nepal from its three barrages into rivers, a district administration official said on Sunday. The release of water has affected over 1.5 lakh people and damaged 171 houses, the top district official told media persons, adding National Disaster Response Force personnel have been deployed in the area to rescue people.

INSIDE

■ CITY.. PG3
Roads may fall apart soon

Bonds of love



Women buy rakhis at Begum Bazaar in Hyderabad on Sunday, eve of Raksha Bandhan. The Covid-19 pandemic is expected to impact the festivities. — P. SURENDRA

Congress' old guard wants Rahul to start Bharat yatra

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG. 2

The fresh internecine war between the so-called old guard and new leaders in the Congress raged on, with senior leader Digvijay Singh on Sunday bringing in Rahul Gandhi directly, saying the former Congress chief should be more active inside Parliament and undertake "yatras" across India. "He is different and wants to do politics differently. We should allow him to do so, but we also would like him to be more active in Parliament and be more accessible to people. As advised by Sharad Pawar, he should go around India. 'Yatras' are important to connect," Mr Singh tweeted. Another senior leader

He (Rahul Gandhi) is different and wants to do politics differently. We should allow him to do so, but we also would like him to be more active in Parliament and be more accessible to people. As advised by Sharad Pawar, he should go around India. 'Yatras' are important to connect

DIGVIJAY SINGH,
Ex-CM, MP

Manish Tewari, one of the first to speak after the virtual meeting of Rajya Sabha MPs with Sonia Gandhi, where Rajiv Satav and K.C. Venugopal, known to be close to Mr Gandhi, blamed the UPA-2

for the Congress' 2014 defeat, on Sunday tweeted a link of the achievements of Dr Manmohan Singh's prime ministership. "Unfortunately, UPA could not surmount sinister conspiracies against it for it was/is led by two genteel and decent souls SG & MMS," Mr Tiwari tweeted. Sources said the outburst by Mr Satav and Mr Venugopal at last week's meeting was Team Rahul's effort to reclaim space after the Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan revolts by Jyotiraditya Scindia and Sacin Pilot, both known to be close to Mr Gandhi. The retribution on the social media by the old guard was swift. Mrs Sonia Gandhi's term as interim president ends on August 10.

India tells Chinese troops to leave Pangong Tso area

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG. 2

India on Sunday pushed China to withdraw its forces from the Finger areas in the Pangong Tso and restore the status quo ante at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh.

The fifth Corps Commanders meeting between 14 Corps Commander Lt. Gen. Harinder Singh and South Xinjiang Military Region Commander Maj. Gen. Liu Lin started at around 11 am at Moldo on the Chinese side of the LAC. India said that the process of de-escalation can only start once Chinese troops disengage from all the friction points

- This week will complete three months of the military stand-off between India and China.
- Chinese have not vacated the Finger 5 area in Pangong Tso and are continuing to hold the ridges in the Finger 4 area.

completely. The meeting went on till late in the night, and there was no official word at the time of going to print. The last meeting between both the Corps Commanders on July 14 had lasted for 15 hours till 2 am. The long duration of these meetings is also due

to language problems as conversations between officers are to be translated as the Chinese are not well versed with English. Since the last meeting, there has been no progress in the disengagement on the ground in 15 days and the Chinese are dragging their feet on moving back to their pre-May 2020 positions. This week will complete three months of the military stand-off after troops from both sides had clashed at Pangong Tso and Galwan Valley on May 5. Chinese have not vacated the Finger 5 area in Pangong Tso and are continuing to hold the ridges in the Finger 4 area.

GENERATIONAL | SHIFT State BJP chief inducts people from all castes and communities in panel

Bandi picks new faces, ignores most seniors

IREDDY SRINIVAS REDDY | DC
HYDERABAD, AUG 2

Telangana state BJP president Bandi Sanjay Kumar has picked many new faces while retaining a few senior leaders in the state committee announced on Sunday. The list was announced after Sanjay got the seal of approval from the party high command. All general secretaries and heads of the party's morchas are new faces,

and have not held any post in the party before. Senior leaders have been retained as vice-presidents. The shape of the new committee makes clear that the BJP is ready to take on the TRS. All major castes and communities have been represented in the panel. The committee has 23 office-bearers, eight state morcha presidents, eight secretaries, four general secretaries, two treasurers and an office secretary. Six former MLAs and two

- All general secretaries and heads of the party's morchas are new faces, and have not held any post in the party before. Senior leaders have been retained as vice-presidents.
- Six former MLAs and two senior leaders were appointed vice-presidents: Dr G. Vijaya Rama Rao, Chithala Ramachandra Reddy, Sankineni Venkateswara Rao, Yendala Laxmi Narayana, N.V.S.S. Prabhakar, Yennam Srinivas Reddy, G. Manohar Reddy and Bandaru Shobha Rani.

senior leaders were appointed vice presidents: Dr G. Vijaya Rama Rao, Chithala Ramachandra Reddy, Sankineni Venkateswara Rao, Yendala Laxmi Narayana, N.V.S.S. Prabhakar, Yennam Srinivas Reddy,

G. Manohar Reddy and Bandaru Shobha Rani. G. Premender Reddy, Dugyala Pradeep Kumar and Kumari Bangaru Shruthi were appointed general secretaries and Manthri Srinivasulu as the organising secretary. Bhanu Prakash was appointed head of the Yuva Morcha, K. Geetha Murthy of the Mahila Morcha and Kondapally Sridhar Reddy was made Kisan Morcha president. Koppu Bhasha will head the SC Morcha,

Hussain Nayak the ST Morcha, A. Bhaskar the OBC Morcha and Afsar Pasha the minority morcha. Sanjay appointed K. Krishna Sagar Rao, P. Rajani Kumari and Rakesh Reddy as spokespersons. The secretaries are: Raghunandan Rao, Prakash Reddy, M. Srinivas Reddy, Bomma Jaya Sree, Palle Ganga Reddy, Kunja Satyavathi, K. Madhava and G. Uma Rani. B. Shanthi Kumar and Bavarlal Varma were named treasurers.

■ Page 3: Cops begin probe into theft case

Amit Shah and BSY test positive, hospitalised

Supriyo who met Shah quarantined; Amitabh tests negative

SANJAY KAW | DC
NEW DELHI, AUG. 2

Union home minister Amit Shah and Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa tested positive for Covid-19. Shah was admitted to the Medanta Hospital in Gurgaon. He took to Twitter to inform people about his health and requested all those who came in contact with him to get themselves tested. In a late night development, Yediyurappa said he had tested positive. In a post on his Twitter handle, Yediyurappa said he was fine but had been hospitalised on doctors' advice.

Yediyurappa, 77, requested all those who had come in contact with him to be wary of Covid symptoms and self-isolate. Sources said the outburst by Mr Satav and Mr Venugopal at last week's meeting was Team Rahul's effort to reclaim space after the Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan revolts by Jyotiraditya Scindia and Sacin Pilot, both known to be close to Mr Gandhi. The retribution on the social media by the old guard was swift. Mrs Sonia Gandhi's term as interim president ends on August 10.

Shah, 55, is under Dr Sushil Kataria's observation. Since Shah has comorbidities, he comes under the vulnerable category. He was on the list of invitees of the Ayodhya Ram Mandir bhoomi puja on August 5, and may not be able to make it. Shah was attending his office in the North Block, besides working from home. He had addressed a webinar at the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts to mark the 100th death anniversary of Bal Gangadhar Tilak. About 50 people were present at the event. He was present at the last meeting of the Union Cabinet held on Wednesday.

Union minister Babul Supriyo, who met Shah recently, said: "I am advised by doctors to confine myself, away from my family members, for the next few days with a test to be done soon."

Actor Amitabh Bachchan, who was being treated for Covid for 23 days at Mumbai's Nanavati Hospital, returned home after testing negative. His son Abhishek is still being treated at the hospital.

UP minister dies of Coronavirus

Lucknow, Aug. 2: Uttar Pradesh minister Kamal Rani Varun, the only woman cabinet minister in the state, died of Covid-19 at a hospital here on Sunday. She was 62. The technical education minister, who tested positive for Covid-19 on July 18 and is the first minister to succumb to the disease, breathed her last at the Sanjay Gandhi Postgraduate Institute of Medical Sciences.

She had comorbidities, including diabetes, hypertension and hyperthyroidism. Hospital director Dr R.K. Dhiman said Kamal Rani who was put on a mechanical ventilator on Saturday had been suffering from fever, cough and breathlessness. "She had bilateral pneumonia at admission and was shifted to ICU on the day of admission itself because



Kamal Rani Varun

of high oxygen requirement." Her condition briefly improved before it started deteriorating. "She was put on mechanical ventilator on August 1 but her condition continued to deteriorate," he said. Meanwhile, the chief of Uttar Pradesh's BJP unit, Swatantra Dev Singh, too tested positive for Covid-19 and has quarantined himself at his home following doctors' advice. — PTI

TN Gov, AP Dy Speaker positive

DC CORRESPONDENTS
CHENNAI/VIJAYAWADA, AUG 2

Tamil Nadu Governor Banwarilal Purohit and Andhra Pradesh Deputy Speaker Kona Raghupati were tested positive on Sunday. Raghupati released a selfie video in which he said that he was suffering from fever. His wife and he went for a test which returned positive. He said as per the doctors' suggestion, they will be in home

quarantine for a week. AP registered 8,555 positive cases on Sunday. The TN Governor, who visited the Kauvery Hospitals for a test and assessment, was asymptomatic and clinically stable. He had been advised home isolation since the infection was mild. He would be monitored by a medical team. Tamil Nadu recorded 5,875 new cases, with Chennai accounting for 1,065.

■ Another report on Pg 3

TS reports 1,891 infections

BALU PULIPAKA | DC
HYDERABAD, AUG. 2

Telangana state reported 1,891 new confirmed Covid-19 patients, taking the overall tally to 66,677. Fatalities from the disease increased to 540 with 10 more people succumbing to Covid-19. For the first time in the week-long period from July 26, Jayashankar Bhupalapilli district, did not report a single case as per the Covid-19 bulletin

issued on Sunday, for the 24-hour period ending at 8 pm on Saturday. The 24-hour span also saw 1,088 persons recovering from the disease leaving 18,547 active cases in the state. Of these, 12,001 were in home isolation. Of the rest of 6,546 patients, 2,397 were in government hospitals and the rest, 4,149 were admitted to private hospitals. Of the latest cases reported, the health department said 517 were from the

GHMC limits, followed by 181 in Ranga Reddy district, 146 in Medchal-Malkajgiri, 138 in Warangal Urban, 131 in Nizamabad, 111 in Sangareddy, and 93 in Karimnagar district. Several other districts continued to report cases in double digits with only four — Nirmal and Vikarabad (eight cases each), Kumrambheem-Asifabad with two, and Nagarkurnool with one case — registering cases in the single digits.

JEWELS STOLEN FROM COVID-19 VICTIM'S BODY

JAYENDRA CHAITHANYA T. | DC
HYDERABAD, AUG. 2

Diamond and gold jewellery worth ₹5 lakh have been stolen from the body of a woman who died of Covid-19 at a private hospital in Banjara Hills. Family members of the 70-year-old woman have lodged a complaint with the police. She was admitted to the hospital on July 23 and succumbed to the virus while undergoing treatment two days later. As the woman's family members, including her son, had contracted the virus and were in isolation, they could not attend her last rites. They realised only later that they had not collected the jewellery she was wearing when she was admitted to the hospital. A pair of diamond-studded ear tops with hanging gold chains and a gold ring have gone missing. Hospital authorities have confirmed that the jewellery was present on the patient, but went missing after her death.

■ Page 3: Cops begin probe into theft case

Roads in a mess, cut branches pose danger

On the street

BSNL closes my phone complaint

My BSNL landline (27506660) and broadband have not been working for more than two months. I have been registering repeated complaints (most recently, 123237952962 dated July 23), which are closed without the phone being rectified. I am paying bills regularly. I request BSNL to fix the problem.

Dr Varun Vijay Gaiki
Hyderabad

Dattatreya Colony needs be sanitised

Some Covid-19 positive cases have been reported at Dattatreya Colony, Asifnagar. I request the GHMC to sanitise the colony. I recommend that the entire Asifnagar area also be properly disinfected as many Covid-19 cases have been reported there. There are a lot of mosquitoes and fogging should be performed to prevent the spread of malaria and dengue.

Hari Prasad Gogikar
Hyderabad



Works stopped at crematorium

The GHMC had undertaken reconstruction of the Hindu crematorium at Govindapuram, Mettuguda, in 2019. The work has still not been completed, which is causing hindrance to the people in conducting the final rites of their loved ones. The crematorium serves not just the local area but also Sitaphalmandi, Lalaguda and other areas. It is also causing a financial burden as families are compelled to go to far-off crematoria at Bansilalpet, Nallagutta and East Marredpally. I request the GHMC to ensure completion of the work expeditiously.

Ravi Kanth Nayakoti
Ph: 9701075145

Marredpally park toilets overflow

Three public toilets are being constructed in the three residential parks, one adjacent to Faust School, and two at the Dildar Ali Khan layout, at East Marredpally. A petition has been sent to the GHMC zonal commissioner, north, by this association, expressing the problems being faced by the residents due to the stink caused by the sewage overflow, with schoolchildren, senior citizens and adults having to wade through the dirty water, but no action has been taken. We request the zonal commissioner to abandon the construction of the three toilets. The sewage lines are old and unable to take the load. Additional pressure on the lines will aggravate the situation. It would be wise to have the toilets constructed on the adjacent main roads where shops and establishments are located, as they do not have a toilet facility.

N. Ramanathan
Secretary, Marredpally Welfare Association

My food card is in state of limbo

I had applied for Food Security Card (FSC) by uploading the documents through Mee Seva (Application No: FSC022002713088) and submitted papers to the authorities of the civil supplies department. The officials conducted an inquiry and recommended issue of the FSC. My claim is pending with the civil supplies officer, Ranga Reddy district. When I asked the officer about the status of the card, he said that they will be issued on government instructions. The government has not passed any instruction to withhold, halt or stop issuing FSCs. I request the officer to issue me the FSC as soon as possible.

Belly Laxmi
Vambay Apartments,
Nandanavanam,
Karmanghat

Tree pruning



Pruned branches left atop trees are hidden danger

Electricity department personnel cut and abandoned branches on top of a tree on the Quthbullapur-

Suchitra main road. The road sees a lot of vehicular traffic and pedestrians throughout the day. There are chances that the

branches will fall on road users and could even claim a life. Every time they prune a tree, the electricity department staff does

the same thing. I hope the authorities notice this complaint and take action.

Sujith Kumar
Quthbullapur



TSSPDCL chopped branches, abandoned them on tree top

Staff from the electricity department, Mint Compound, Khairatabad, had taken up maintenance work of pruning tree branches in Venkatramana Colony, Padmavathinagar Colony

and left the branches on the tree itself. The branches may fall on road users. I request TSSPDCL to clear the branches.

Dr M. Navin Kumar
Ph: 9949971545

Road trouble

St Ann's road poses danger for motorists

The road near St Ann's High School, Vijaynagar Colony, Masab Tank, was dug up for civic works recently but has not been relaid. This causes problems for motorists and pedestrians. Residents have repeatedly expressed their resentment through various platforms and lodged complaints with the GHMC but nothing has led to a solution. People had staged a demonstration last month and the authorities assured them of action but it all went in vain. I request the authorities to look into the matter immediately.

Syed Sadiq Jafar Hussain
New Mallepally



Provide a permanent fix for footpath

The GHMC has dug up the road outside our apartments and put interlocking tiles on the footpath, which are much above the road level. We are facing a problem in leaving and entering our apartments, as the footpath has not been sloped. Workers have packed some mud as a temporary measure, which was swept away by the first spell of rain. I request the authorities to make a permanent solution.

Gautam Chand Munot
Secunderabad

Illegal encroachment by shops on Nampally Bazaar Ghat road

I request the GHMC officials to take urgent action against illegal encroachments on the footpath and demolish the shops which are under the road widening plan of the GHMC on the Nampally Bazaar Ghat road opposite Yousuf Baba Dargah crossroads. Notices were issued 10

years ago and the compensation amount was deposited in court. If the GHMC delays action further, the situation will worsen for pedestrians and locals. Every day there are a lot of arguments between commuters and traffic police.

Ameera Khan
Hyderabad

Madhupala Enclave internal roads are in a very bad shape

The internal roads in Madhupala Enclave, Ward VI, SCB, were laid about 15 years ago and are in a very bad shape now. With the onset of the monsoon, the movement of colony residents, especially the elderly, is affected. There have

been instances of two-wheelers skidding on the roads. I request the SCB to take immediate action in ordering laying of CC roads in the colony.

Vanam Ravinder Reddy
Ph: 99499 92951



Despite repeated complaints bus stop at Nimboliadda is not repaired

Despite repeated complaints, the authorities are not repairing the Nimboliadda bus stand which is in a dilapidated condition. The bus stand is located adjacent to the water ATM and opposite Sangam Hotel. I request

the Chief Minister and the transport minister to take action against the officials concerned and get the structure renovated quickly.

Pavan Vishal Ramvikas Raj
Nimboliadda, Hyderabad

Traffic at risk on rail bridge at Mallapur

The Mallapur railway bridge is highly congested. It is a narrow structure, with two-way traffic and there is no speed breaker. Vehicles move fast and accidents have occurred in the past. There is an urgent need to construct a parallel bridge. Till that time, speed breakers with road dividers should be installed there to slow down vehicles.

J. Srinivas
HB Colony, Moula Ali

Put 'no entry' boards at OU gate, hostel

The road towards the Osmania University campus is closed on the NCC office side and at Ladies Hostel. Officials have not placed a 'no entry' board at the two locations. Many are not aware of this new arrangement and motorists have to waste their time and fuel by driving 2 km to go up to the NCC Gate from Vidyanagar to the Ladies Hostel and return.

Aashis Sen
Nimboliadda, Kacheguda

Water woes

Elderly women have to queue up for hours for water supply

We had complained about water supply problems in our area but there has been no action by the HMWS&SB so far. Water is not being supplied to the taps installed in the individual houses. The 1BHK scheme houses are not been constructed properly, which is causing the problem. Old women

are facing problems as they have to stand for hours to collect water. The water we get contains dangerous chemicals. I request the authorities to see ensure that safe drinking water is supplied in homes.

Resident,
Government Quarters,
Behind GST Bhavan

Water supply stopped without informing people at Barkatpura

HMWS&SB did not supply water on Sunday morning by not supplying drinking water without notice to the residents of Barkatpura, lane opposite Telangana Yuvathi Mandali function hall. Because of this, residents

where compelled to purchase drinking water cans at ₹75 each from shops. I request the authorities to take action on the staff responsible for the irregular water supply.

T. Kailash Ditya
Barkatpura

Hakeempet Community Hall area gets dirty drinking water

Residents of the area near Hakeempet Community Hall have been receiving drinking water contaminated with sewage for the last six months. The water is yellowish and black and gives off a foul smell. We have made scores of complaints to the HMWS&SB but no action has been taken till now.

Children are falling sick because of contaminated water. The doctor has advised us to avoid using tap water for drinking and cooking until the problem is resolved. We are forced to purchase water for drinking and



for use in the kitchen. I request the local MLA and the HMWS&SB to take action immediately to stop the water contamination.

Abdul Khader
Hyderabad

Garbage problem



Uncleared garbage piles up near Anjali theatre, must be cleared

Garbage is lying uncleared on the road near Anjali theatre, General Bazaar, Secunderabad. This is a prime business location and the road sees a lot of

traffic throughout the day. I request the GHMC officials concerned to clean up the road at the earliest.

Ravi Chandra
RP Road

Lift piled-up garbage, mud at Venkat Rao Nagar

Around 12-15 piles of garbage and mud are dumped since 45-60 days in Venkat Rao Nagar Colony, PG Road, behind KIMS Hospital. In spite of 10-15 complaints registered on the GHMC app, no action has been taken by the GHMC. The complaints numbers include 310720907182

and 270720902736. Now, the garbage has started giving off a foul smell. It is posing a threat to the health of residents of Venkat Rao Nagar Colony and those in Sri Amba Bhavani Apartments, Highness Residency, Aakashdeep Apartments, Bhavani Enclave, Shree Encla

ve, Juslin Pride Apartments, Tirthankar Apartments, Tirthbhumi Apartments and individual houses. Since the GHMC has failed to respond, I request the higher authorities to take action.

Alpesh Gandhi
Venkat Rao Nagar Colony, PG Road

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

Drainage on road

Padmaraonagar water stagnation creates problem

There is a problem of water stagnation at H. No. 6-1-118/25/1, Padmaraonagar, Abhinavagar/Madhuranagar Colony, caused by the elevated portion of the 40-feet main road. Rainwater and water from other houses collects in front of our house. The stagnant water is giving rise to mosquito breeding, apart from unhygienic conditions. This problem was addressed to the GHMC deputy



commissioner and executive engineer, Circle 30, vide a letter dated June 9. Pictures were also uploaded on Whatsapp. The GHMC deputy engineer inspected the premises one-

and-a-half months back. Thereafter, there has been no response. We are facing a lot of inconvenience due to the stagnated water with mosquitoes and the stink. I am a senior citizen and have an 87-year-old mother. The GHMC is also not spraying disinfectants here. I request the GHMC to solve the inundation problem in view of the health hazards.

Achunala Rambabu
Padmaraonagar

16 manholes in Wali Colony need to be fixed

We residents of Wali Colony, 7 Tombs Road, Tolichowki, request the HMWS&SB, Golconda Circle, to depute a team to clean the sewage water in the 16 manholes in the colony. The manholes have not been cleaned for a year. We are in the middle of the rainy season. We are afraid that if there is any more rain, water from the manholes will enter our houses.

Residents of Wali Colony

Potholes filled with sewage at Saibabanagar

There are huge potholes filled with sewage from a broken drainage line at Saibabanagar, Shivrampally railway station road, Kattedan. This has become a big health hazard for people living around the area. We have lodged complaints with the authorities but no one has taken action to repair the drain and the road. I hope at least now the authorities will act.

Ashish Sirigiri
9966402888

DC IMPACT



No barricades at Metro stn, thank you DC

Hyderabad Metro Rail has removed the barricades at the Mettuguda Metro Rail Station adjacent to the Railway Quarters, following my complaint in Speak Out (*Barricades at Mettuguda Metro Station stop pedestrians, walkers, DC, July 27*). I wish to thank Hyderabad Metro Rail for the same and *Deccan Chronicle* for highlighting the issue.

Swetha Rani Sirivennela
Mettuguda

Thank you DC, Fever Hospital left turn cleared

Following the publication of my complaint, (*Fever Hospital crossroads left turn is blocked*) in Speak Out on Monday, the traffic police erected barricades for smooth flow of traffic. I thank *Deccan Chronicle* for its selfless service and the traffic police.

K. Badrinath
Hyderabad

Garbage mess at CRIDA road left untouched

Heaps of garbage have been dumped on the Santoshnagar CRIDA road, near the water tank. It comprises mainly plastic waste and has not been removed for many weeks. In the absence of bins, residents and nearby hotels dump the waste on the roads. Dogs and cattle feed on the garbage. It is leading to hygiene issues and make it dangerous for children.

Mohd Fasiuddin
Santoshnagar

IN BRIEF

Man loses ₹7L in betting, ends life

Hyderabad: A 30-year-old man died by suicide at a hostel in SR Nagar on Sunday. SR Nagar sub-inspector D. Krishnaiah said that the deceased, S. Mahesh, 30, of Kurnool, was working as a marketing executive in a company. The police official said Mahesh had left a note mentioning that he was suffering from a financial crisis. Investigation revealed that he had lost about ₹7 lakh in online betting.

Inter student dies by suicide

Hyderabad: A second year Intermediate student from Bowenpally died by suicide at his house on Sunday. According to Bowenpally police, the victim, a HEC stream student at the Marredpally Government Junior College, was upset over the past week. When his parents asked him the reason, he did share anything with them. On Sunday at around 3 pm, his parents who returned home after attending some work saw his body. "A note was recovered from the room, in which it was written that he wanted to become an advocate. He was apprehensive that due to Covid-19, and the prevailing conditions, he may not be able to achieve his dream," said Bowenpally sub-inspector K. Srinivasa Rao.

NEW THERMAL SCREENING DEVICE AT AIRPORT

HARLEEN MINOCHA | DC HYDERABAD, AUG. 2

The Shamshabad airport on Sunday received a Unicef-funded mass fever screening system from the Union ministry of health to enhance the efficacy of the screening against Covid-19.

The scanner is mounted to the ceiling and can scan, detect and track febrile persons with elevated skin temperature. The system automatically adjusts and adapts to the ambient temperature without any intervention, said an official communication from the airport. Pradeep Panicker, CEO, GMR Hyderabad International Airport, thanked the health ministry for getting the modern equipment installed at the airport and said that it will make the task of the health officials who serve at the airport round the clock a little easy.

FOUR PERSONS HELD UNDER NUISANCE ACT

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, AUG. 2

The Pahadishareef police on Sunday arrested four persons who trespassed on a property owned by film actor Mohan Babu in Jalpally.

According to the Pahadishareef police, on Saturday evening, four persons travelling in an MUV (AP31 AN 0004) entered the Manchur township belonging to the actor at Jalapally and without permission and reportedly created nuisance.

Following a complaint, police arrested Raghav Biradar, 30, Gowtham Rao, 23, K. Anand, 24, and S. Raju David, 22, all residents of Mailardevpally, were arrested.

The group was on a joy ride to Jalpally, where film shootings take place, when they entered the property.

AIR FORCE BAND HOLDS CONCERT

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, AUG. 2

Ahead of the Independence Day celebrations, a concert by Indian Air Force band was organised against the backdrop of Golconda Fort on Saturday. The event was conducted to communicate the supreme sacrifice of the freedom fighters and tireless efforts of frontline warriors.

As many as 20 Covid-19 warriors of Hyderabad region witnessed the event which, they said, inspired them to participate in the fight against the pandemic.

The IAF band is renowned for its patriotic melodies and has garnered accolades at national functions. Many famous tunes like: *Sare Jaha Se Achha, Teri Mitti, Ai Mere Watan Ke Logon and Jai Ho*, were played at the concert.

Roads may fall apart soon

GHMC fails to re-lay roads; rain and fund crunch cited as reasons

MADHY DEEKSHITH | DC HYDERABAD, AUG. 2

The GHMC has managed to re-lay just 280 km of roads in seven months against the target of 709 km. Even in this, it has laid only the first layer, which is prone to wear and tear. Expect the roads to deteriorate during the rains and after, with potholes and worse. Road repairs will only resume only by the end of October. Civic authorities are blaming the 'unseasonal rain' for the slow pace of work.

However, highly placed sources in the corporation said that though weather was a factor, the actual reason for the delay was the other bugbear: severe fund crunch.

The corporation has spent ₹400 crore from its kitty, which was to be paid through the Hyderabad Road Development Corporation Limited, a special purpose vehicle constituted to avail bank loans.

● **THE LOCKDOWN** period when much work could have been done as the roads were free, has been wasted.

This money was used to lay the first layer of bitumen, and the GHMC needs another ₹1,400 crore to complete the work. The government after a series of meetings has assured the corporation that it would reimburse the funds once HRDCL avails the loan.

However, the lockdown period when much work could have been done as the roads were free, has been wasted. Traffic is back on the roads now, and the rains have started in real earnest.

Sources said many stretches in the city, especially in LB Nagar, were already in a bad shape after two months of rain due to the compromised quality of bitumen. Things would get worse

when the top layer gets damaged by passing traffic and the rain.

Under Comprehensive Roads Maintenance Programme (CRMP), the civic body was supposed to lay 709 km of roads along with footpaths and lane markings. Tenders have been finalised for five years. The state government has accorded administrative sanction for seven packages totalling ₹1,839 crore for the maintenance of main roads for five years.

Sheer neglect



A mesh of cables attached to a pole near the historic Charminar presents a sore sight for the visitors. Despite several complaints being made, the civic authorities have failed to clear the mess.

— P. SURENDRA

Oxygen cylinder supply to ease soon, says Etala

BALU PULIPAKA | DC HYDERABAD, AUG. 2

Oxygen supply woes plaguing some government hospitals that are treating Covid-19 patients will soon be overcome, health minister Etala Rajendar said on Sunday.

Seven large hospitals in the city and the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Hospital in Warangal will receive bulk oxygen cylinders before August 10 and this will ensure that there are no further issues relating to supplying oxygen to Covid-19 patients.

The MGM Hospital, along with Osmania, Chest, Sarojini Devi, King Koti hospitals and the Telangana Institute of Medical Studies (TIMS) will also be equipped with liquid oxygen storage facilities. "Once these systems are

in place, they can store the oxygen requirement for all patients for at least a week at a time," Rajendar told reporters after inspecting TIMS and interacting with the patient in the isolation wards and the ICU.

The minister urged people not to wait for their symptoms to get worse before getting themselves checked at a government hospital. Some people were not reacting when they develop a sore throat, cough, or fever or other symptoms associated with Covid. By the time they begin experiencing difficulty in breathing much of the damage is being done to their lungs, he said.

"Even after being placed on supplementary oxygen, oxygen saturation levels among such patients are not rising increasing their risk. I appeal to everyone

not to delay seeking medical advice as soon as they begin experiencing any symptoms," Rajendar said.

He said after Gandhi, the next hospital that is admitting Covid-19 patients is TIMS which has more than 1,300 beds including those in the ICU wards.

"It does not cost more than ₹10,000 at the most to treat a Covid-19 patient. There is absolutely no need for people to rush to private hospitals and spend lakhs of rupees for the treatment which is available for free at the government hospitals. The key to quick recovery is early reporting to a hospital," he said.

Rajendar again warned that private hospitals fleecing patients and playing on the fears among people, will face tough action from the government.

Gudur: Mismatch in Covid figures

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, AUG. 2

TPCC treasurer Gudur Narayana Reddy sees a dichotomy in the number of Covid-19 deaths being reported daily in the twin cities and the state government's proposal to set up five new LPG-based crematoria in the twin cities in view of the rising number of Coronavirus cases in Hyderabad and Secunderabad.

"The Covid-19 death toll in Telangana, as being shown in daily official media bulletins, has never exceeded 15 on any given day. If these official figures are genuine, then, why is the state government making arrangements to cremate 60 more bodies in addition to the already existing crematoria? Are authorities expecting the situation to worsen further or are they hiding an already

worsened condition from people," he asked.

The Congress treasurer observed, "The government, which does not establish hospitals for common people to get treated, is building crematoria. Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao will be remembered in history as the leader who did nothing to save people's lives, but made arrangements for their last rites," he remarked. He underlined that the KCR government has wasted precious time in preventing Coronavirus from spreading.

Narayana Reddy said instead of finding means to tamper with data of Covid-19 cases and deaths, apart from exploring means for quick cremation of bodies, the state government should focus on strengthening health infrastructure and save as many lives as possible.

8,555 new cases, 68 deaths in 24 hours in AP

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, AUG. 2

There was a slight relief on Sunday as 8,555 positive cases were recorded across Andhra Pradesh, which is considerably less than the average 10,000 Covid-19 positive cases that were reported every day for the past few days.

Meanwhile, Deputy Speaker Kona Raghupati and his wife tested positive on Sunday. He released a selfie video in which he said that he was suffering from fever and when he and his wife went for the corona test, it showed positive.

He said as per the suggestions of doctors, they will be in home quarantine for a week.

As many as 68 new deaths reported in the past 24 hours taking the overall toll to 1474. The total positive cases increased to 1,58,764. As many as 82,886 patients were discharged after completion of treatment and 74,404 patients are undergoing treatment across the State.

The highest number of 11 deaths was registered in Krishna district, followed by eight in Guntur, seven each in Visakhapatnam and East Godavari, six each in Kurnool and Nellore, five in Srikakulam, four in Prakasam, three each in Kadapa, Vizianagaram, West Godavari and Anantapur districts.

As many as 52,834 tests conducted in the past 24-hours in which 8,555 were diagnosed positive.

AP tested a total of 20,65,407 samples, which is the highest in the country.

As many as 6,272 recovered patients were discharged from various hospitals in the last 24 hours.

NO | TREATMENT

Many pregnant women not aware about tele-consultation

Women suffer without lady docs

KANIZA GARARI | DC HYDERABAD, AUG. 2

An estimated 40 per cent of gynaecologists are not available in the city, either as they are infected by Covid-19 or have stopped visiting hospitals due to the Coronavirus spread.

Small clinics which operated only for consultation have closed down due to the difficulty in paying rent and salaries and purchasing protection gear.

These doctors are either operating from

home or have migrated to their hometowns. These gynaecologists used to visit different hospitals and had patients in three to four nursing homes.

All this has made it difficult for first-time pregnant women, and many are not aware that they can access their doctors via tele-consultation. Many women depend on the neighbourhood clinics and not finding their doctors has left them high and dry.

Gynaecologists in medium and big hospitals are either on rota-

tional service or coming on need basis. A senior gynecologist explained, "Corporate hospitals have restricted consultants to per visit and their payments are made accordingly. For this reason, consultants are preferring tele-consulting or have taken a break."

Government gynaecologists state that they have been "highly exposed" as women from containment zones were brought for delivery and they had no protective gear.

Dr Vijaya Krishnan, senior gynecologist

explained, "It has been tough for all of us. We have worked 24x7 and helped all the women who were enrolled with us and those who were referred to us."

Dr Roya Rozati, senior gynaecologist, explained, "If there is a concern an ultra-sound can be done at 12 weeks. Tele-consultation available for patients. Many women are being monitored online and we encourage the patients to use this facility."

Hospitals are taking emergency cases and

birthing is carried out with full protection in government and private hospitals.

Dr Shantha Kumari, senior gynaecologist and laparoscopic surgeon, said, "It is the unnecessary visits that we do not want the pregnant woman to make. Ultrasound scans are being done only if there is a concern. It is difficult for many people to understand but to avoid infection they must keep vulnerable people safe and this includes pregnant women."



Bandlaguda gets 10 cm rainfall

T.S.S. SIDDHARTH | DC HYDERABAD, AUG. 2

In a span of 24 hours, beginning from 8.30 am on Saturday, torrential rain lashed parts of the city and the state. The city's highest rainfall of 103.8 mm was registered at Bandlaguda in Uppal mandal.

This was followed by Thatiannaram in LB Nagar and CBCID Colony in Kukatpally, which received 94.5 mm and 86.8 mm of rainfall, respectively.

If all goes by the predictions made by the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD), the city will continue to witness rainfall for the next few days, albeit with lesser intensity.

"Monsoon is active across the State in July and August. That is why we are witnessing a strong monsoon wave. While there would be rains over the city for the next few days, the intensity might not be as strong as what we had witnessed," IMD director, K Naga Ratna, told *Deccan Chronicle*.

Similarly, private weather forecasting outfits like Skymet predict that over the next 24 hours, light to moderate showers are expected over South Chhattisgarh, South Odisha, parts of Telangana, Marathwada, Southwestern, and South Madhya Pradesh, South Gujarat, South Madhya Maharashtra, Uttarakhand, Meghalaya, and Lakshadweep. Heavy rainfall may occur at one or two places.

As a result of the rains, there was water logging in low-lying areas causing traffic hurdles. Fortunately, since there was no or very little wind movement, power disruptions were down to a minimum.

"We only cut power whenever there is wind blowing, which could cause the high-tension wires to make contact with one another. But, in the recent rains there was only a downpour, no gale-like winds," said J Srinivas Reddy, director (operations), Telangana State Southern Power Distribution Company Limited (TSSPDCL).

Man who escaped from custody held

JAYENDRA CHAITHANYA T. | DC HYDERABAD, AUG. 2

A 27-year-old man who escaped from police custody while being taken to the Cherlapally central prison on Saturday, was arrested by the Kushaiguda police on Sunday.

The accused, M. Durga Prasad, 27, was originally arrested by the Rachakonda cybercrime police for harassment and blackmailing women online.

Prasad, a resident of Lingala in Nagarkurnool district, was booked in three cases of cybercrime for threatening women that he

would post their morphed pictures on social media platforms if they did not pay him money.

The accused was produced before a court at LB Nagar and taken to the Cherlapally prison at around 6.50 pm on Saturday.

When the two escort personnel were completing the formalities, Prasad who was sitting in the police vehicle escaped.

Kushaiguda police said that following a complaint from cybercrime head constable V. Ramchander, Prasad was apprehended on Sunday at the Inlibun bus station. He has since been lodged in prison.

COPS BEGIN PROBE INTO THEFT CASE

From Page 1

The deceased person's son, who is still in isolation, filed a complaint with Banjara Hills police through a representative on Saturday.

Detective inspector D. Ravi Kumar said, "A case has been registered. Inquiries are underway to find if the jewellery was removed at the hospital or before performing her final rites. Nobody has been arrested yet."

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY	
E-TENDER NOTICE	
E-Tender Notice No. CWMPD-05-2020-21 Date : 30/07/2020. On line (through e-tendering) for the following work is invited by Chief Workshop Manager, Bridge Workshop, East Central Railway, Plant Depot, Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya for and on behalf of the President of India, from reputed firms.	
E-Tender Closing Date : 31.08.2020	
1. Name of the work with its Location : Complete rewiring of 41 Nos. Hoists, including replacement of all cables, Contractors, MCCB, bus bar using VFD module control at Flash Butt Welding Plant, Plant Depot, Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya.	
Tender Document Cost = ₹5,000/-	
2. Approx. cost of the work : ₹1,80,04,615/-	
3. Earnest Money : ₹2,40,000/-	
4. Date and time for Closing of e-tender : 31.08.2020 at 15.00 hrs.	
5. Website particulars of e-tendering : www.ireps.gov.in	
Executive Engg. (FB)/Plant Depot/ ECR/Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya PR/0489/PDM/Engg./T/20-21/32	

कार्यालय आयुक्त आदिम जाति तथा अनुसूचित जाति विकास :: संचालनालय :: ब्लॉक डी, भूतल, इंद्रावती भवन, अटल नगर रायपुर (छ.ग.) website-www.tribal.cg.gov.in e-mail - ctd.cg@nic.in	
क्रमांक/आदि.यो./12/2020-21/2778 नवा रायपुर अटल नगर दिनांक 30/07/2020	
अनुसूचित जाति, अनुसूचित जनजाति वर्ग के युवक/युवतियों को हॉस्पिटालिटी एवं होटल मैनेजमेंट प्रशिक्षण योजनांतर्गत वर्ष 2020-21 में प्रशिक्षण संस्था के चयन हेतु "रूचि की अभिव्यक्ति" के तहत प्रस्ताव प्राप्त करने की अंतिम तिथि में द्वितीय संशोधन की सूचना है।	
छत्तीसगढ़ राज्य के अनुसूचित जाति, अनुसूचित जनजाति वर्ग के (10+2) परीक्षा उत्तीर्ण युवक/युवतियों को देश की प्रतिष्ठित एवं अनुभवी हॉस्पिटालिटी एवं होटल मैनेजमेंट प्रशिक्षण संस्थान के प्रशिक्षकों के माध्यम से प्लेसमेंट लिंक प्रशिक्षण दिया जाना है। प्लेसमेंट लिंक प्रशिक्षण देने की इच्छुक एवं मान्यता प्राप्त हॉस्पिटालिटी एवं होटल मैनेजमेंट प्रशिक्षण संस्थाओं से "रूचि की अभिव्यक्ति" दिनांक 27.07.2020 समय अपराह्न 01:00 बजे तक आमंत्रित की गयी थी, जिसमें प्रस्ताव प्राप्त करने की अंतिम तिथि में वृद्धि करते हुये संशोधन की सूचना प्रकाशित किया गया था।	
2. कोरोना वैश्विक महामारी के कारण लॉकडाउन से वृद्धि के फलस्वरूप इस तिथि में वृद्धि करते हुये प्रशिक्षण संस्थानों से प्रस्ताव प्राप्त करने की द्वितीय संशोधित अंतिम तिथि दिनांक 20.08.2020 समय अपराह्न 01:00 बजे तक नियत की जाती है।	
3. शेष यथावत रहेगा।	
(डी.डी.सिंह) आयुक्त आदिम जाति तथा अनुसूचित जाति विकास नवा रायपुर अटल नगर (छ.ग.) जी.-82761/2	

IN BRIEF

Bibi rails at media over protests

Tel Aviv: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu railed on Sunday at swelling protests against his rule, saying they are egged on by a biased media that distorts facts and cheers on the demonstrators. Netanyahu has faced a wave of protests in recent weeks, with demonstrators calling for the long-serving, indicted leader to resign and panning his handling of the coronavirus crisis. Netanyahu has painted the protests as dens of "anarchists" and "leftists" out to topple "a strong right-wing leader." The protests have largely been peaceful.

Israel greets India on friendship day

Jerusalem: Israel on Sunday showered India with goodwill greetings on Friendship Day, peppered with a Bollywood hit number, with Israeli President Reuven Rivlin also congratulating Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the people of India on the occasion. Rivlin tweeted in English and Hindi his message tagging Modi. "Happy Friendship Day to our dear friends in India!" the Israeli President wrote. "Mitrata Divas par meri or se apko aur bharat ki janta ko bahut bahut badhai," he wrote in Hindi. The Israeli embassy in New Delhi this year again hit upon a famous Bollywood number from Amitabh Bachchan-starrer Yaarana to convey their warmth towards the Indian people sharing a montage of joint meetings and collaborations between the two sides.

Burkina Faso blast kills six

Ouagadougou: At least six people, mostly children, died when an improvised explosive device went off in northern Burkina Faso, security sources and local officials said on Sunday. The IED, which exploded as the group's cart was passing late Saturday, also injured four others, they said. Northern Burkina Faso is notorious for jihadist attacks which have killed more than 1,000 people there and displaced about a million more since 2015. The victims were "nearly all children who were returning from grazing their livestock", a local in Ouahigouya said. "The cart which carried some of them rolled over a mine."

N95 MASKS MOIST HEAT TREATMENT ELIMINATES COVID

Toronto, Aug. 2: Scientists have found that moist heat treatment of N95 masks eliminates the coronavirus which causes Covid-19, an advance which could allow reuse of these scarce resources in hospitals and long-term care facilities. According to the study, published in Canadian Medical Association Journal (CMAJ), moist heat treatment of masks for 60 min at 70 degrees Celsius in a humid condition did not damage their structure or affect function. "A single heat treatment rendered SARS-CoV-2 undetectable in all mask samples," the scientists, including those from the University of Toronto in Canada, wrote in the study. "This low-cost reprocessing strategy can be applied 10 times without affecting the mask's filtration, breathing resistance, fit and comfort, and thus may help to alleviate the global shortage during the Covid-19 pandemic," said study co-author Gregory Borschel from The Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto, Canada.

TECH | REVOLUTION

Egypt wrestles women's rights online

Cairo, Aug. 2: Social media has become a new and dangerous battleground for women's rights in Egypt after young TikTok influencers were jailed while a resurgent #MeToo movement decried male sexual violence. Last Monday, a court sentenced five female social media influencers, Haneen Hossam, Mowada al-Adham and three others, to two years in jail each on charges of violating public morals over content posted to video-sharing app TikTok. International digital rights

group Access Now described them as "all women, all young, all exercising their right to freedom of expression online". Just two days later, a court sentenced another young social media influencer, Manar Samy, to three years in prison over TikTok videos, deeming the clips in which she dances and lip-syncs to popular songs to be "inciting debauchery". Many in the deeply conservative country have cheered on the arrests, as traditional social values clash with

online content seen as racy and sexually suggestive. "The Egyptian government is on a campaign to arrest and prosecute women influencers on... TikTok for violating the values of the Egyptian family" and "inciting debauchery and immorality," Access Now said in a statement. The Egyptian authorities "not only want to control what citizens say, but also how they should dress, talk, and behave online," said Marwa Fatafta, the group's Middle East and North Africa policy manager. — AFP

Melbourne imposes night curfew as virus cases rise

SA cases top 5,00,000, Latin America records 2 million Covid deaths

Melbourne, Aug. 2: Australia's second-largest city imposed an overnight curfew on Sunday to halt the spread of Coronavirus cases, as South Africa's infection count topped more than half a million.

Six months after the World Health Organisation declared a global emergency, the virus has killed more than 6,80,000 people and infected more than 17.5 million. Fresh clusters have been reported in countries — such as Australia — that had previously brought their outbreaks under control. Australia's Victoria state imposed fresh, sweeping restrictions on Sunday, including a curfew in

● **WITH INFECTIONS** and deaths soaring, the UN health agency has warned that the Coronavirus pandemic would be lengthy and could lead to "response fatigue".

Melbourne for the next six weeks, a ban on weddings, and schools and universities going back online in the coming days.

"Anything short of this will see it drag on for months and months," said Victoria leader Daniel Andrews.

Despite a lockdown, Melbourne has continued to report hundreds of new cases daily even as

other states in Australia have reported zero or a small number of cases.

Many other parts of the world are struggling with much bigger outbreaks. Health authorities in South Africa who had been expecting a surge in cases after the gradual loosening of a strict lockdown reported that cases had exceeded the half-million mark.

The nation is by far the hardest-hit in Africa, accounting for more than half of diagnosed infections, although President Cyril Ramaphosa said the fatality rate is lower than the global average.

With infections and deaths soaring, the UN health agency has

warned that the coronavirus pandemic would be lengthy and could lead to "response fatigue".

"WHO continues to assess the global risk level of Covid-19 to be very high," the agency said, adding that the effects of the pandemic "will be felt for decades to come". The virus is still spreading quickly across much of Latin America, which has now recorded more than four million cases and almost 2,00,000 deaths — half of them in Brazil.

Mexico overtook Britain to become the third hardest-hit country in virus deaths — after Brazil and the US — with more than 46,600 fatal

cases. The US, the worst-hit country in the world, has now tallied more than 4.6 million cases and 1,54,319 deaths.

The pandemic has spurred a race for a vaccine with several Chinese companies at the forefront, while Russia has set a target date of September to roll out its own prophylactic.

However, US infectious disease expert Anthony Fauci said it was unlikely his country would use any vaccine developed in either nation. "I do hope that the Chinese and the Russians are actually testing the vaccine before they are administering the vaccine to anyone," he said. — AFP

Test of endurance



People run past the Kremlin Wall as they take part in a half-marathon in Moscow, Russia, on Sunday. Around 17,000 people took part in the race.

— AP

CHIEF OF U.S. 'TERRORIST GROUP' ARRESTED: IRAN

Tehran, Aug. 2: Iran said on Saturday it had arrested the head of a US-based "terrorist group" accused of being behind a deadly 2008 bombing in the southern city of Shiraz and planning other attacks.

"Jamshid Sharmahd, who was leading armed and sabotage operations inside Iran, is now in the powerful hands" of Iran's security forces, state television said, citing an intelligence ministry statement.

It did not elaborate on where or when the alleged leader of the opposition royalist group known as the Kingdom Assembly of Iran, or Tondar (Farsi for Thunder), was detained. Iran slammed its arch enemy the United States for hosting Sharmahd and "supporting known terrorists who have claimed responsibility for several terrorist acts inside" the country.

"This regime must answer for its support of this terrorist group and other groups and criminals who orchestrate armed, sabotage and terrorist operations against the people of Iran from inside America and spill Iranians' blood," a foreign ministry statement said.

The intelligence ministry said Sharmahd had orchestrated the April 12, 2008 bombing in a packed mosque in Shiraz that killed 14 people and wounded 215.

A US State Department spokesperson said "the Iranian regime has a long history of detaining Iranians and foreign nationals on spurious charges".

"We urge Iran to be fully transparent and abide by all international legal standards." — AFP

Media to be barred from Trump's poll nomination fete

Washington, Aug. 2: Media will be barred from the Republican National Convention in North Carolina later this month, US news outlets reported, when President Donald Trump will formally receive his party's nomination.

Soaring Coronavirus cases have already forced Trump to cancel the part of the convention planned for Florida's Jacksonville in July.

"We are planning for all of the Charlotte activities to be closed press: Friday, August 21, Monday 24 given the health restrictions and limitations in place in the state," the convention spokesperson had told the Arkansas Democrat Gazette.

"We are working within the parameters set before us by state and local guidelines regarding the number of people who can attend events."

"This is an ill-advised decision that the @GOP @GOPconvention should reconsider," Zeke Miller, president of the White House Correspondents' Association, said Saturday.

"The nomination of a major party presidential candidate is very much the business of the



Donald Trump

● **TRUMP HAS** been forced to scrap his signature rallies because of the coronavirus epidemic, which is killing more than 1,000 Americans a day.

American people." Miller later tweeted: "An RNC official now says that the decision is not final and that they are still working through press coverage options."

Trump has been forced to scrap his signature rallies because of the Coronavirus epidemic, which is killing more than 1,000 Americans a day.

— AFP

FB BOWS TO BRAZIL JUDGE, BLOCKS 12 A/cs

Brasilia, Aug. 2: Facebook announced on Saturday it has obeyed a Brazilian judge's order for a worldwide block on the accounts of 12 of President Jair Bolsonaro's supporters who are under investigation for allegedly running a fake news network.

Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes said on Friday night that the company had failed to fully comply with a previous ruling ordering the accounts to be shut down, saying they were still online and publishing by changing their registration to locations outside Brazil.

Facebook issued a statement saying it complied due to the threat of criminal liability for an employee in Brazil. But it called the new order "extreme," saying it poses a "threat to freedom of expression outside of Brazil's jurisdiction and conflicting with laws and jurisdictions worldwide." — AP

EX-UK MIN HELD ON SUSPICION OF RAPE

London, Aug. 2: A former UK minister and sitting Conservative Party lawmaker, who has not been named as he is yet to be charged, is out on bail after being arrested on suspicion of rape.

According to reports, the allegations of rape against the parliamentarian were made by a former employee who alleges that the lawmaker assaulted her, forced her to have sex and left her so traumatised that she had to go to hospital.

"On Friday, July 31, the Metropolitan Police Service received allegations relating to four separate incidents involving allegations of sexual offences and assault," the Metropolitan Police said in a statement. — PTI

Biden to announce his V-P choice soon

Washington, Aug. 2: Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden has promised to soon reveal his running mate. And as the suspense builds over who Biden will choose to be on the ticket for November's election, this much is known — it will be a woman.

About a dozen names have been bandied about by pundits and the press but the favorite for the vice president slot appears to be California Senator Kamala Harris.

The speculation that the 55-year-old Harris would be the choice was fueled further last week when Biden appeared at an event clutching a notepad with her name on it.

Written on the pad under Harris's name were several

complimentary remarks including "Talented," "Great help to campaign" and "Great respect for her." The November 3 election is shaping up to be one of the most consequential in recent US history and comes amid a health emergency, an economic crisis and a national reckoning over racial injustice.

The choice of a running mate is always one of the most important decisions a White House hopeful makes but it has added significance this year because of Biden's age.

Biden turns 78 years old on November 20 and he would be the oldest man ever to assume the office if he defeats President Donald Trump in November.

— AFP

IN REMEMBRANCE

Mr. & Mrs. K. NARAYAN RAO
Ex. Asst. Commercial Manager
Indian Airlines
WE MISS YOU
Children & Grand Children
Ph: 8801362577

12" ANNIVERSARY
IN FOND AND CHERISHED MEMORY

A. Satyanarayana Mudiraj
Retd. Spl. Grade Deputy Collector
DOB: 11-10-1938 DOD: 03-08-2008
Inserted by:
Sons: A. Chakravarthy Mudiraj
A. Bharathwarthy Mudiraj
Ph: 9440667782, 9848914088

1st Death Anniversary

Sri. Yogesh Chadha
DOD: 3rd August 2019
Inserted by:
Wife: Rani Chadha,
Son: Varun Chadda,
D.I.L: Kanchan Chadda,
Ansh & Ahan

MEMORIAL
The memory of the just is blessed.
Proverbs 10:7

Mrs. N. PRAMILA
MPDO (Retd.)
D.O.B: 22.4.1960 Slept in the Lord 24.7.2020
Memorial Service on 3rd August at our residence.
Inserted by:
Husband: B. Yesuratham
Daughters, Sons-in-law & Grand Children
Ph: 9000274908, 9848777357
(S/2021/D00363)

OBITUARY

Sri Narendra Manji Patel
Passed away peacefully on 24th July 2020
Ho will be always remembered for his kindness, generosity, helpful nature
SGVM 1978 Batch Classmates
ASHA, JAYSHREE, RITA, DHIRENDR, HITEN, MANOJ, PIYUSH, VINOD

5th DEATH ANNIVERSARY
Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. (Matthew 5:4)
IN LOVING MEMORY OF

Mr. SAMSON SUNIL
Kadamandla (USA)
1.3.1958 - 3.8.2015
S/o Late Mr. K.D. John Wesley
Babu you will forever remain alive in our hearts, even though we are learning to live without you. We still miss you so much.
Fondly remembered by
Wife: Anitha, Children & Grand Son (USA)
Mother & Family Members

SHRADHANJALI

SATYA SRINIVAS MATHUR
S/o Mohan Chandra Mathur
D.O.B: 23.7.1975 D.O.D: 26.7.2020
Inserted by Mother: Pushpa Chandra
Wife: Naga Laxmi
Sisters: Maheshi, Sureshi
Brother-in-law: Komarraju Ravi Kumar
Nephew: Preetham Sinha, Abhishek
Niece: Shivani, Harshitha
Ph: 9949020934 - 9121491307
Near & Dear
(S/2021/D00367)

In Loving Memory

Sri. Yogesh Chadha
DOD: 3rd August 2019
Inserted by
Daughter- Ranum Chadha Joel,
Son in Law- Sunny Joel &
Grand Son- Aarsh

IN LOVING MEMORY

Late KOTHAPALLY MOHAN RAO
DOD: 3 August 2011
WE ALL MISS YOU A LOT
Inserted by: Kothapally Rani - Wife
Kothapally Srikanth - Son,
Kothapally Sirisha - Daughter-in-law
Kothapally Krishitha - Grand Daughter
Kothapally Vamsikanth - Son,
Kothapally Shalini - Daughter-in-law
Kothapally Harshavardhan - Grand Son
Kothapally Shauryavardhan - Grand Son

1st ANNIVERSARY
I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Timothy 4:7

GANDHAM NOEL DAVID
DOB: 23.12.1969 - DOD: 03.08.2019
We miss you every moment in our life.
Inserted by: Mrs. Aparna (Wife)
Saroj (Son), Sarah (Daughter)
Ph.: 9550839174

OBITUARY

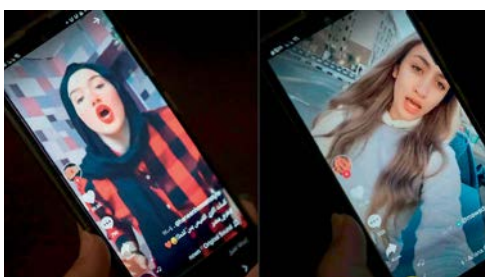
Smt. KIRTAN BEN PATEL
W/o Late Bhanuchandra Patel
Age: 84 years
Expired on 02.08.2020 at 9:30 AM from our residence, 79-Prestige Park, Gundia Pochampally, Medchal District.
May her soul rest in peace
Mehul, Kavita, Tanay & Mishri
Mob: 9885337191, 9052178490

11th DEATH ANNIVERSARY
"I will dwell in the House of the Lord forever." Psalms 23:6

DOREEN SALVADORE
(Rtd. Teacher of St. Patrick's High School)
Your blessings are always there on us
I Miss You Lots
Inserted by: Maryann Salvadore,
Family Members & Loved Ones.
Ph.: 9885242396

15th DEATH ANNIVERSARY

KOTHAPALLY NARSA GOUD
15 Yrs. have passed, your memories and inspiration still fresh in our hearts.
Inserted by:
K. Vara Prasad & Rajani
K. Srinivas & Indira
K. Jeevan Kumar & Hari Priya
Ujwal, Jatin, Aryan, Rehan, Geetu, Vaishnavi.
(S/2021/D00366)



In this file photo, a woman checks on her phone an Instagram account for reporting allegations of sexual harassment and misconduct against Ahmed Bassam Zaki, a 22-year-old student, in Cairo.

— AFP

SHORT TAKES

UNABLE TO CLEAR LOAN, ODISHA FARMER ENDS LIFE

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHADRAK, AUG. 2

A farmer in Odisha's Bharak district allegedly ended his life by hanging himself from the ceiling fan of his room over loan burden late on Saturday night.

The deceased was identified as Mahendra Das of Rajualibindha village under Bhadrak Rural police limits.

According to reports, Mahendra had taken a loan of ₹50,000 from four money lenders in the locality. Due to the Covid-19 lockdown, his source of income was severely affected and he became unable to repay the loan.

Mahendra's family members alleged that he was under stress as the private money lenders were putting pressure on him for the early repayment, due to which he took the extreme step.

"He was under immense mental pressure as the lenders asked him to repay the loan as early possible. Around 2.30 am, he killed himself by hanging himself with a rope inside his room," the family members said.

NEP: BREAKFAST FOR KIDS BESIDES MID-DAY MEALS

New Delhi, Aug. 2: The mid-day meals provided to students in government or aided schools should be supplemented by breakfast, the new National Education Policy (NEP) has proposed.

The policy which was approved by the Union Cabinet earlier this week has noted that morning hours after a nutritious breakfast can be particularly productive for the study of cognitively more demanding subjects and hence recommended expansion of the mid-day meal scheme to include provisions for breakfast in schools.

"Children are unable to learn optimally when they are undernourished or unwell. Hence, the nutrition and health (including mental health) of children will be addressed, through healthy meals and the introduction of well-trained social workers, counsellors, and community involvement into the schooling system," the policy said.

"Furthermore, research shows that the morning hours after a nutritious breakfast can be particularly productive for the study of cognitively more demanding subjects and hence these hours may be leveraged by providing a simple but energising breakfast in addition to mid-day meals," it added.

In locations where hot meals are not possible, a simple but nutritious meal — groundnut or chana mixed with jaggery and local fruits may be provided. "All school children shall undergo regular health check-ups especially for 100 pc immunisation in schools and health cards will be issued to monitor the same," the policy said.

VISA SERVICES TO FRANCE TO BEGIN SOON: ENVOY

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC NEW DELHI, AUG. 2

French Ambassador Emmanuel Lenain has assured Indian students planning to go to France for higher education in the near future that the French government will make sure that foreign students are able to study in France despite the Covid-19 pandemic, adding that visa services for students would begin soon.

Speaking recently at a virtual seminar organised by the French Embassy in India on the global profile of the French language, the French envoy said, "Next year will not be a blank year as we will make sure that students go to France to study even if it means a few weeks of online learning in the beginning." Lenain added, "I am confident that onsite teaching will resume soon, given the improvement in the sanitary situation of France. For now, I advise you (students) to apply and prepare everything so that once the visa services begin, and this will be soon, your visa requests can be expedited."

France has been India's close strategic partner in Europe, a fact that was once again highlighted last week when the first batch of five state-of-the-art Rafale fighter aircraft for the Indian Air Force (IAF) touched down on Indian soil.

With love from sisters



Young women tie rakhis on the wrists of Border Security Force (BSF) personnel on the eve of Raksha Bandhan festival at Inter National Border Octori post in Suchetgarh of Jammu on Sunday. — PTI

NEW SERO SURVEY: TEAMS TO COLLECT 25-40 SAMPLES PER DAY

New Delhi, Aug. 2: The new sero-prevalence survey in the national capital will exclude those who were part of the previous exercise and 25 per cent of the fresh samples in all districts will be taken from persons aged 50 and above, according to a standard operating procedure prescribed for it. As per the SOP for the survey that began on Saturday, each sample collection team is to collect 25-40 samples per day.

"All districts are to ensure that out of total number of samples, 25 per cent are of those younger than 18 years of age, another 50 per cent are in the age group of 18-49 years and remaining 25 per cent of those in the age group of 50 years or more," reads the SOP prescribed by the Delhi's directorate general of health services. The fresh exercise is being undertaken for a comprehensive assessment of the Covid-19 situation in Delhi, but due to Id holiday not many samples could be collected on Saturday, officials said.

Hence, it has been decided to extend the survey till August 7, a senior official said on Saturday. Originally, a five-day exercise from August 1-5, it will span all 11 districts of Delhi and cover various demographic segments.

Systematic Random Sampling methodology will be used for collection of samples with mandatory exclusion of individuals or households selected during the last sero survey conducted in June-July, the SOP says.

The survey began with samples collection from various districts, including North Delhi and Northwest Delhi, to start with on Saturday.

Sources said six districts were reportedly covered on Sunday. — PTI

LONG-TERM IMPACT

MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, AUG. 2

A report of the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) stating that the Baghjan well blowout has harmed the endangered Gangetic dolphins and the uncontrolled oil and gas emissions will have a long-term impact due to contamination of groundwater, has become a major area for environment activists in Assam.

The report comes amid the report of another fire breaking out at Baghjan on Sunday, just 200 metres ahead of the oil well blowout site. The fire

In search of obedient stenographers to advance government narrative

Apart from facing harassment, reporters are routinely called by cops to explain their stories

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC SRINAGAR, AUG. 2

Everyday has been a struggle for journalists in Jammu and Kashmir ever since the separatist campaign burst into a major violence in 1989. As many as 18 journalists and other mediapersons have been killed in the line of duty during the past three decades.

The saga of their becoming themselves 'news' continues. Post-August 5, 2019, mediapersons in Kashmir have been caught in a more complex situation in many ways.

Denial or poor availability of means of communication and curbs on their movement have mired

their functioning. Apart from facing harassment, humiliation, beating and even imprisonment, the reporters are, over the past one year, routinely called to police stations to explain their stories and even reveal their sources in a new trend of official pestering.

In April, FIRs were registered against three Kashmiri journalists and two of them, including woman photojournalist Masrat Zahra, were booked under the provisions of harsh Unlawful Activities (Prevention), the Act which entails imprisonment up to seven years if proved guilty.

Zahra and another jour-

365 DAYS AFTER 370

nalist, Gowhar Geelani, were accused by the police of placing posts and photographs on social media platforms "tantamount to glorifying the anti-national activities and terrorists and dent the image of law enforcing agencies besides causing disaffection against the country (India)".

The third journalist, Peerzada Ashiq, faced police action over his report which appeared in *The Hindu* and was called to two police stations in summer capital Srinagar and southern Anantnag district to explain his posi-

tion.

Though the police actions evoked widespread resentment and condemnation in media quarters in Kashmir, the rest of the country and abroad, several journalists interviewed by this correspondent said that the reality for journalists in Kashmir is; "we continue to struggle in worse conditions".

On June 2, the government came up with a new media policy which authorises it to decide what is "fake", "unethical" or "anti-national" news, and initiate legal action against the journalist or media organisation concerned, including withdrawal of government's

Revised guidelines for international arrivals issued

New Delhi, Aug. 2: The Union health ministry on Sunday issued a set of revised guidelines for international arrivals which will come into effect from August 8.

According to the guidelines, all travellers would need to give an undertaking on the online portal www.newdelhiairport.in that they would undergo mandatory quarantine for 14 days, that is, seven days paid institutional quarantine at their own cost, followed by seven days isolation at home with self-monitoring of health.

"Only for compelling reasons/cases of human distress such as pregnancy, death in family, serious illness and parent(s) with children of the age of 10 years or below, home quarantine may be permitted for 14 days," the ministry said.

"If they wish to seek such exemption, they shall apply on the online portal at least 72 hours before boarding. The deci-

sion taken by the government as communicated on the portal will be final," it said.

The travellers can also seek exemption from institutional quarantine by submitting a negative RT-PCR test report on arrival.

This test should have been conducted within 96 hours prior to undertaking the journey. The test report should be uploaded on the portal for consideration, the guidelines stated.

"Each passenger shall also submit a declaration with respect to authenticity of the report and will be liable for criminal prosecution, if found otherwise. The test report could also be produced upon arrival at the point of entry at airport in India," it said.

Before boarding the plane or ship, the guidelines said the dos and don'ts shall be provided along with the tickets to travellers by the agencies concerned. — PTI

SSR case: Bihar police to probe Disha's death

DC CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, AUG. 2

After coming to loggerheads with Mumbai police over investigation of actor Sushant Singh Rajput suicide, the Bihar police will now probe the suicide of his former manager Disha Sallian. Sallian had jumped to death from a Malad high-rise on June 8 and Rajput was also questioned in connection with the suicide then.

The Bihar police has also sought help from the Mumbai police for investigation in Rajput suicide and have asked them to formally join the probe in case filed by the Bihar police against actor Rhea Chakraborty.

The visiting team of Bihar police added that they will question all those who knew Rajput in a bid to ascertain the motive behind the actor's suicide.

The police will probe any possible connection between the two suicides. After several supposed skirmishes between the Bihar police and their counterparts in Mumbai over the investigation, the former has now asked the Mumbai police to join the investigation in the case against Rhea Chakraborty.

"Statement of the actor's content manager Siddharth Pithani will also be recorded. He was staying with the actor for the last one year," said a police officer.

The Bihar police have recorded statements of 10 people in connection with the suicide and they have also sought for the investigation details on forensic laboratory, inquest, post-mortem, and CCTV camera footage from Mumbai police. Rajput was found hanging in his suburban Bandra apartment on June 14.

Ram temple to foster brotherhood, harmony: Temple trust member

New Delhi, Aug. 2: The decades-long movement for building a Ram temple in Ayodhya may have been marked by political and, at times, social discord, but the beginning of its construction from August 5 will foster in society "brotherhood and harmony", the values associated with Lord Ram, Shri Ram Jannabhoomi Teertha Kshetra Trust member Kameshwar Chaupal said on Sunday.

The trust, formed by the central government following the Supreme Court's ruling in November last in favour of building the temple at the site, has invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi to lay the foundation stone of the Ram temple on August 5.

"This will also be a foundation stone of Ram Rajya in the country. Ram's life encapsulates the values of social harmony and brother-

hood. The temple will foster these values in our society," Chaupal said.

Chaupal, a key figure of the Ram Jannabhoomi movement and a Dalit member of the trust, said that the BJP politically benefitted from the movement because the party associated itself with it and even "sacrificed" its four governments, including in Uttar Pradesh, for the sake of the temple.

The Congress government at the Centre had dismissed four BJP-ruled state governments in 1992 following the demolition of Babri mosque during a "kar seva" led by Hinduva organisations. "Our movement never barred any political party from joining it. It was like the gushing water of Ganges, with some collecting its sacred water and some not despite the river flowing near their door," he said. — PTI

Nath to host recital of Chalisa on Aug 4

Bhopal, Aug. 2: Madhya Pradesh Congress chief Kamal Nath will host a recital of 'Hanuman Chalisa' at his residence here on Tuesday, a day before the ground-breaking ceremony for Ram temple construction in Ayodhya.

All Covid-19 protocols will be strictly followed during the event, Congress spokesman Bhupendra Gupta said on Sunday.

"Hanuman Chalisa' recital has been organised at Nathjis residence on Tuesday. He is an ardent devotee of Hanumanji. He has asked the party cadre and leaders to recite

'Hanuman Chalisa' at their homes on Tuesday, Gupta said.

On Saturday, Kamal Nath said a Ram temple is being constructed in Ayodhya with the consent of every Indian. Asked about the reason behind the event being organised by the former state chief minister, Gupta said Tuesday is an auspicious day.

"Nothing should be read into it. It is purely a spiritual event," he said. On 'Hanuman Jayanti' in April, Nath could not hold a grand annual religious event in his constituency Chhindwara in the wake of the fall of his government, he said. — PTI

Activists are concerned as uncontrolled oil, gas emissions will contaminate groundwater

Baghjan blowout harmed Gangetic dolphins: Report

broke out from the condensate oil kept in the field at Baghjan oil field in eastern Assam's Tinsukia.

Oil India Limited (OIL) has not yet confirmed the reason of the fire which has created panic among the locals at Baghjan. Earlier, an explosion occurred at the site in which three foreign experts were injured.

The study of the WII on cumulative impact of the gas wells has revealed that oil wells in and around the national park will be detrimental to the region's unique ecosystem and that it is extremely vulnerable to earthquakes.

Calling for an assessment of the cumulative impact of the gas wells, the CII in its report to the Centre said that a dolphin was found dead from poisoning from the oil spill. The location of the blowout near Dibru-Saikhowa National Park, the Maguri-Motapung wetlands, are home to endangered hooleck gibbons and Gangetic dolphins.

The Union ministry of environment, forest and climate change has sent the WII's findings to the Assam government to begin restoration work.

"Given the potential of oil blowout and oil spill

disaster like this, such oil wells in the vicinity of Dibru-Saikhowa National Park and important bird area complex, will be detrimental to the conservation value of this unique ecosystem," the report said.

The report said that richness in bird species was found to increase with an increase in distance from the site, possibly due to the oil spill and intense noise from the blowout.

The decline in bird species was highest in grasslands (59 per cent) and wetlands (85 per cent) compared to areas located away from the site, it

added. The report said that there has been a massive decrease in the Gangetic dolphin presence in Lohit, Dibru, and Maguri-Motapung after the blowout. It added that the noise due to the blowout can be heard as far as 12 km and beyond, making the area extremely unhealthy for humans, animals, and birds.

The report pointed out that the 65-70 hectare burnt out area includes crop fields, grasslands, and swamps. "There was a visible oil spill on June 16, downstream of the well." The report stated that

fish species have also declined in wetlands and river tributaries, where dissolved oxygen levels have fallen due to the oil spill. The concentration of toxic polyaromatic hydrocarbons in fish samples from the wetland was found to be 10-100 folds higher than normal.

The report is based on a study of WII scientist Qamar Qureshi. The ministry has forwarded the findings of the CII to all the stakeholders including the Oil India Limited, which said that they are also looking into the voluminous report and its recommendations.

It is significant that a committee formed by the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has also faulted Oil India Limited (OIL) for mismatch between planning and execution, leading to eastern Assam's Baghjan well blowout that caused "extensive damage" to public and private resources.

The eight-member panel headed by retired Gauhati High Court Judge Brojendra Prasad Katakey was formed on June 24.

A team of experts, including six foreign disaster control specialists, is yet to cap the well that has been ablaze since June 9.

DECCAN Chronicle

3 AUGUST 2020

Return to democracy only way to go for Congress

The reference in the meeting of the Rajya Sabha members of the Congress about the performance of the two editions of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government at the Centre seems to have further exposed the fault line within the party. While a section is blaming the governments for the party's fate, another is staunchly defending it. It is, however, a welcome development that leaders of the India's grand old party have thought it fit to ruminate on what went wrong in the past. What defies logic is that the new critics bring to the discussion table not what is happening now or what has happened in the immediate past; they focus on the distant past. They hardly realise that India went to the polling booths twice to elect a Lok Sabha in the period; India under the National Democratic Alliance government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has covered a lot of distance during the period.

The Congress is faced with one too many hard facts. The party has not been with a president for almost a year, the period in which momentous decisions were taken by the ruling dispensation which changed the course of this nation. The Congress watched in silence when a government with no majority in the Rajya Sabha hollowed out Article 370 and passed the Citizenship Amendment Bill; these two moves severely undermined the idea of an inclusive India that the Congress has always stood for. Its voice has not been emphatic even as the nation has been teetering on the brink of an economic ruin and when the government's response to the pandemic Covid-19 has been disastrous. The way the party ran its campaign for the Assembly elections in Maharashtra and Haryana, as well as the developments in Madhya Pradesh where it lost its government, could force people to think that Congressmen have lost the appetite for power; the casual way it approaches threats to its government in Rajasthan could reinforce such a feeling.

If the Congress wants to assert its position in national politics, then it must do its job as the principal Opposition party and expose the chinks in the government's armour. Internal bickering and blame game will not strengthen the party to do the job but initiating the process of democracy will. The party has not been able to conduct organisational elections doing justice to the idea for long; the last one occurred when P.V. Narasimha Rao was elected president at the Tirupati session of the All-India Congress Committee way back in 1992. A return to the democratic process within the party could throw up leaders with grassroots support who can organise people's resistance to the government's attempts to smother the voices of dissent, undermine institutions of democracy and divert attention from real life issues by playing up religious and emotional topics. The Congress must also address the real issues it is facing; it cannot defeat the BJP in the diversionary tactics. The new rebels and their supporters will do well to realise that.

A snub to Advani, Joshi

The Ram Mandir whose *bhoomi puja* on Wednesday will be attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, among others, can trace its roots directly back to the September 1990 Toyota yatra of then BJP chief Lal Krishna Advani, which set off a chain of events that led to one of the most infamous episodes of recent Indian history — the Babri Masjid's demolition in December 1992, in blatant disregard of the Supreme Court's orders, for which Mr Advani and several others are still facing trial as accused in the Babri demolition case, and on which he recorded his final deposition only last week. Given that, it's remarkable, to say the least, that the Supreme Court-formed trust to oversee the temple's construction did not see it fit to include Mr Advani's name as one of the 50 VIPs invited to attend the ground-breaking ceremony on August 5 (which is, incidentally, the first anniversary of the government's abrogation of Article 370 and Kashmir's carving up into two Union territories). Also left out was BJP stalwart Murli Manohar Joshi, a fellow Babri accused, though two other leaders — former UP CM Kalyan Singh (under whose watch the mosque was demolished) and former Union minister Uma Bharti — did receive invitations. While, after this snub was widely reported, it is learnt Mr Advani and Mr Joshi were telephonically invited by the trust to join the ceremony via video conferencing, it's not quite the same thing.

One must not forget the political payback the BJP got after Mr Advani's rathayatra — from 85 Lok Sabha seats in 1989 it got 120 seats in 1991, and over three years after the mosque was razed, this rose to 161 in the 1996 election. The party got 181-182 seats in the 1998/1999 elections, putting the BJP-led NDA in power for the next six years, with Mr Advani as Atal Behari Vajpayee's trusted deputy. But in 2013, with UPA-2 on its last legs, the veteran leader opposed Narendra Modi's rise to the top. Seven years later, the *margdarshak* is still being put in his place.

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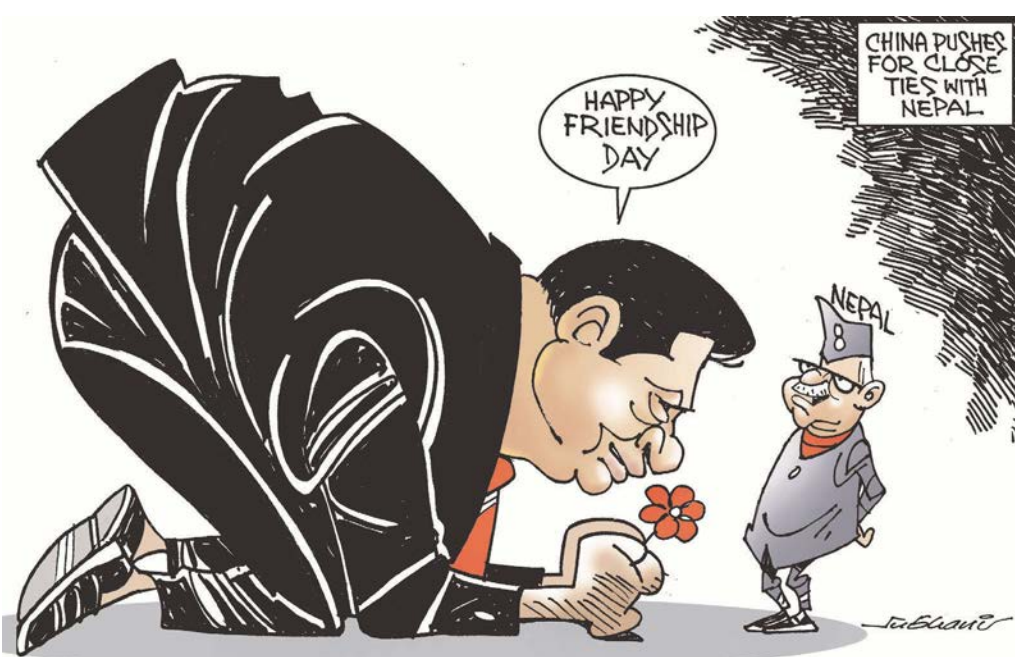
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Subhani



Year after J&K ambush, many thorny questions



Manish Tewari

State of the Union

High on the hubris of a second electoral victory, the NDA/BJP government carried out a legislative coup d'état on the state of Jammu & Kashmir. After flooding the state with the armed forces of the Union without any prior consultation with any stakeholders leave alone the Opposition, the government on 5th of August 2019 introduced the Jammu & Kashmir reorganisation bill 2019 and a resolution to repeal Article 370 of the Constitution. The bill became law despite vociferous opposition in both the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. I had the privilege of leading the Opposition's charge in the Lok Sabha. A state for the first time in the history of India stood bifurcated into two Union Territories as on 31st of October 2019.

That law for a variety of reasons is patently unconstitutional and is under challenge in the Supreme Court for the past one year. One aspect that perhaps has not been highlighted in the list before the apex court is that the bill flies in the face of the Pre-Legislative Consultation Policy instituted by the previous UPA government on 5th February, 2014. The said policy clearly states:

“The department/ministry concerned should publish/place in public domain the draft legislation or at least the information that may inter alia include brief justification for such legislation, essential elements of the proposed legislation, its broad financial implications, and an estimated assessment of the impact of such legislation on environment, fundamental rights, lives and livelihoods of the concerned/affected people,

etc. Such details may be kept in the public domain for a minimum period of 30 days for being proactively shared with the public in such manner as may be specified by the department/ministry concerned.” To the best of my knowledge the said policy was never repealed by the first or second NDA/BJP.

One year later it is now time to take stock of what India has gained through these actions. It would be a non-sequitor to say that civil liberties and fundamental freedoms were the first casualties. They have been mercilessly trampled underfoot by the jackboot of the state.

Home ministry statistics reveal 6,605 people were taken into custody following the reorganisation of the state. 255 of them continue to be in detention in various prisons across the country even one year later. The central government was compelled to detain three former chief ministers of the state namely Dr Farooq Abdullah, Omar Abdullah and the BJP's comrade in arms chief minister Mehbooba Mufti. She still continues to be in detention. The 83-year-old former Union minister Saifuddin Soz endures illegal incarceration even a year later. On Wednesday last, the government told the Supreme Court that Mr Soz was not under any detention. Tragically, the same day, he was captured on candid camera screaming that what the government had told the Supreme Court was patently incorrect and policemen were not allowing him to move out of his home. This is even more chilling that a person can be detained without any formal legal processes and that too interminably.

What is even more disconcerting is the purported letter written by the Executive Committee of the Jammu & Kashmir Bar Association to the Chief Justice of India on June 25, 2020. The letter states that out of 600 odd habeas corpus petitions filed in the J&K high court since August 2019, “99 per cent of the habeas corpus petitions have remained pending”. Even a law student understands that the jurisprudence of habeas corpus places it on a pedestal when compared to other writs since it concerns the life and liberty of an individual.

Coupled with this has been the extended periods of curfew and the non-resumption of 4G internet services in Kashmir considering that the whole world has been compelled to go virtual in the wake of the China Virus alias Covid-19.

In other words there has never and still isn't even minimalist support for the abrogation of Article 370 in Kashmir. Even in Jammu the reality has begun to sink in that the influx of outsiders would not be in Kashmir that continues to be volatile but in Jammu. It has remained largely peaceful over the three decade long militancy. The new domicile rules have further reinforced the perception that the NDA/BJP government wants to transform the demographic complexion of J&K.

There are some other implications that are even more portentous. Articles 230 and 231 of the Indian Constitution empower Parliament to extend the jurisdiction of high courts to Union Territories and establish

ment of a common high court for two or more states, respectively, while Article 230(1) uses the phraseology “two or more high courts and a Union Territory”. Can this be read to mean that two Union Territories can have one common high court? There seems to be no constitutional clarity. Though Section 75 of the J&K reorganisation bill says the high court of Jammu & Kashmir would be a common high court for the Union Territories of J&K and Ladakh, the constitutional status of the J&K high court would need to be examined in this light of the wording of Article 230 (1).

China reacted sharply to the reorganisation of Jammu & Kashmir and the home minister's bellicose utterances on Aksai Chin. Their foreign office spokesperson stated: “China deplores and firmly opposes that (move). This is unlawful and void and this is not effective in any way and will not change the fact that the area is under Chinese actual control.” Were the government's actions the trigger for the Chinese theatre level aggressions that India is currently dealing with is a question that the NDA/BJP would need to answer itself.

Finally, what are the implications of this internal reorganisation qua the Shimla Pact of 1972? The Agreement states, “Pending the final settlement of any of the problems between the two countries, neither side shall unilaterally alter the situation.” Would the reorganisation carried out last year render the agreement dud or does it still remain valid given that Pakistan has reorganised the internal dynamics of PoK and the Northern Territories ad-nauseam in the past 70 odd years? The jury remains out on that.

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

LETTERS

FAULTY CRANE

Government organisation (HSL) and negligence are two sides of the same coin (11 killed in Vizag crane crash, DC, Aug. 2). The casual attitude of government officials killed 11 people. How could the HSL accept a defective crane that cannot carry full load? Why were the installation and commissioning assigned to different agencies and not done by the crane manufacturer?

Ramarao B.
Hyderabad

INACTIVE GOVT

It is evident that Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao has totally failed in containing the virus (TS Covid tally over 2,000 in 24 hours for first time, DC, Aug. 2). The Chief Minister is not responding to genuine questions being raised by national parties and behaving like a Nizam. It is better if he accepts moral responsibility and quits than be a silent spectator.

B. Ramesh
Hyderabad

The government doesn't seem to be concerned about the daily rise in Covid cases in TS. It is more concerned about building a new Secretariat and winning the GHMC election by laying foundation stones, announcing sops and welfare measures for cadre. The condition of hospitals is pitiable. Taking advantage of this, private hospitals are fleeing patients. Hope the government also concentrates on this burning issue.

Chandrasekhar
Secunderabad

Review of prices, procurement policy

NEW DELHI, August 2

Experts in the Union Finance Ministry are of the view that a review of the Government's prices and procurement policy is necessary to hold the price line, which continues to show an upward trend.

The reason for the prevailing high prices of commodities is attributed mainly to the high price fixed for foodgrains and the liberalisation of the procurement policy following the removal of wheat zones.

Procured of foodgrains is, therefore, much below the expectation. The Government might also find it difficult to release the procured foodgrains during lean seasons at acceptable prices.

Gunjan Sinha



Nepotism basis of casteism: Our ancients knew its pitfalls

Best articulated in the *Shrimad Bhagavad Gita*, it was not for nothing that our ancients based the *varna* system on *gunas*. It was to encourage us to choose a line of work centred on our own unique inclination and temperament. It was a warning against the dangers of dynasty and the nepotism it breeds. It was to create a society where worth was held in higher esteem than birth. That, despite this teaching from our most revered, our society deteriorated into *jaati*, branded “caste” by our colonial masters, tells us how much we must guard against the dangers of descending into anything like it again. Which means that if we value merit, we must seriously consider what our ancients warned us against. The current debate on nepotism is therefore welcome.

The makings of caste can be found in any group of people who inherit exclusive privileges or are perceived as distinct. Next only to our political parties, this is all too apparent in the film industry. Both nurture the institutionalisation of dynasty and the nepotism that surrounds it. While Rahul Gandhi represents privilege without calibre in politics, there are any number of representatives from

the other side, especially in the film industry. Understandably so, given its popularity quotient. So we find the highest level of calibre struggling to find its rightful place in an industry that is all too insecure in the face of it. Why? Because it is fraught with second, third, even fourth generation dynasts who prefer to favour their own.

To be fair to the film industry, it is not as if generation after generation of dynasts from the same family are bestowed with the highest chair. One could perhaps say this is because there is a high table instead. But then deserving outsiders have managed to get breaks despite the oligarchy of dynasts that sit at this table. Not to mention that if dynasts with talent have found a place all too easily in the industry, dynasts without talent have been eased out. Yes, the easing out has come only after they were given far more breaks than they deserved but should this bother us? Isn't it perfectly natural to want to pass on what ever is in one's domain to one's children? Furthermore, it would be tough to find an area where nepotism doesn't exist. From big business to seminars, it's a tendency we display despite knowing it lowers standards.

The widespread display of the tendency however is no reason to give nepotism a clean chit. There is talent to consider and, unlike wealth, there's no guarantee that it be passed on to one's children. Take politics for instance. Despite the declining fortunes of the Congress under his leadership, some nine relaunches and the availability of superior talent, the party still awaits the dynast's nod to lead the party again. Until then the Italian mother keeps the chair warm for her son. The only hope for young emerging leaders is to stay a sycophant indefinitely or to leave and start anew. As for the film industry, however great the talent, the struggle is always painful for the outsider. Talent often gets shafted in awful ways thanks to an ecosystem that values pedigree over it. PR agencies, media, award functions all march to the tune of the big guns. Production houses take advantage with unfair contracts. They offer nothing but peanuts as compensation, often even tying aspirants down like bonded labour to prevent them from taking up other prestigious offers. It is this that destroys any semblance of a level playing field over and above the advantage dynasts invariably have.

The question that must be answered finally is why pick only on political

parties and the film industry if nepotism exists everywhere. Well, because given their high visibility, the influence they wield is disproportionate. In fact, we should add cricket to this list of high-power influencers as well. For those who have doubts, the number of dynastic parties, shorn of any merit that abound, offers conclusive proof. It is this humongous influence that they exert that makes it so important for all such spaces to raise the bar. Any lowering of standards to accommodate one's own eventually destroys them as well as others by creating an ecosystem that generates sub-standard output. We all know what happened to our cricket team when players from one region were given preference over others. We all know what is happening to the most dynast-ridden party of them all. Once the grand old party of the country, today, it is not even a pale shadow of itself. We all also know how easily Bollywood dishes out what Hollywood already has. Sometimes even what Pakistan has!

In the time when we had the *varna* system, it is said that based on their *gunas*, the teachers would guide the student's choice of *varna*: Brahmin or scholar, Vaishya or wealth creator, Kshatriya or warrior, Shudra or

worker. This suggests the prevalence of an ecosystem that favoured merit. In a country where dynasty has gone so far that even a dynast, such as the late actor Rishi Kapoor, was forced to question why everything was named after the Gandhis, we definitely can't afford to be complacent any more. We need to recognise the pitfalls of dynasty and nepotism and create a milieu for our times that will throw up talent and allow it to flourish. The difference this makes shows in the level of cricket our team plays today. Now imagine the difference if the film industry and political parties, and, by and by, the country were to create such a milieu. There would be innovation and originality instead of sorry imitation. We would lead instead of trail and follow. Become healthy role models for future generations. Serve to make a nation we would all be proud of.

As said earlier, it was not for nothing that our ancients based the *varna* system on *gunas*. Let us learn from their wisdom. Let us not make the same mistake twice.

Gunjan Sinha is a Bengaluru-based advertising veteran and a consultant in the strategy and positioning for consumer and industrial brands

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	37,606.89	-0.34
Nifty 50	11,073.45	-0.26
S&P 500*	3,271.12	0.77
Dollar (₹)	74.8	74.8
Pound Sterling (₹)	98.14	-1.01
Euro (₹)	88.79	-0.95
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	54,538▲687	1.25
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	43.11	0.17
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.837	0.012
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.533	0.000

* As of Friday/Saturday

GST collections decline to ₹87,422 cr in July

The country's GST collections declined to Rs 87,422 crore in July from Rs 90,917 crore in the previous month. The July collections, however, are higher than Rs 62,009 crore goods and services tax (GST) mopped up in May and Rs 32,294 crore in April. In July 2019, the GST revenue was over Rs 1.02 lakh crore. During the month, GST revenues of all major states were down in the range of 15-20 per cent over July 2019.

Govt to bring all helmets under BIS regime



The government has initiated a process to bring helmets under the mandatory BIS regime as part of efforts to reduce fatal injuries involving two-wheelers, the Road Transport and Highways Ministry said. Once the process is completed only BIS-certified helmets for two-wheeler riders would be manufactured and sold in India. The ministry has issued a draft notification to bring helmets under compulsory BIS certification.

Kuwait bans flights from 31 countries

Kuwait suspended commercial flights from 31 countries, just as the Gulf state re-opened its airport to such operations. While other flights will resume, countries on the barred list include India, Iran, China, Brazil, Lebanon, Spain, Singapore, Egypt and Sri Lanka, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation said. The airport resumed commercial flights on Saturday and plans to reach full capacity by mid-2021.

Nafed procures 95,000 tonnes of onion as buffer

The National Agricultural Cooperative Federation of India (Nafed) said it has procured 95,000 tonnes of onion directly from farmers at prevailing rates for creating a buffer stock on behalf of the government. Last year, Nafed had purchased a total of 57,000 tonnes of onion from the 2018-19 rabi crop under the Price Stabilisation Fund. The target this time is to buy 1 lakh tonnes of onion.

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■ Elevated inflation levels a concern MPC may opt for pause in rates

FALAKNAAZ SYED
MUMBAI, AUG. 2

There is a strong likelihood of the monetary policy committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) voting for a pause in rates on August 6, as recent data suggests that the headline inflation may likely remain near the upper end of the RBI's inflation mandate of 4 per cent plus or minus 2 till September, said economists.

The drivers impacting the persistent high food inflation such as demand side disruption and the extent of good monsoon would be keenly watched by the MPC members as these would have a significant bearing on inflation numbers softening ahead.

So far, to provide the much-needed boost to revive the Indian economy, the MPC has reduced the repo rate by 115 basis points and shifted from repo to reverse repo as the signaling rate. But given the pandemic-induced slack in the economy, a few economists expect the MPC to prioritise growth over inflation and still reduce interest rates further even as the repo rate stands at a historical low of 4 per cent.

Repo rate is the rate at which RBI lends money to commercial banks for short term needs.

The apex bank's MPC headed by governor Shaktikanta Das is scheduled to meet for three days from August 4 to August 6.



The headline Consumer Price Index (CPI) for June 2020 came higher than consensus expectations and was at 6.1 per cent year-on-year, after remaining in 7.2 per cent in April and 6.3 per cent in May. Real rates, which have been a driver of inflation in the past, are moving towards the negative terrain after six long years.

Pranjal Bhandari, chief economist at HSBC Global Research, said, "After cutting rates by 115 bps over two consecutive policy meetings, we think the RBI will pause in the upcoming August 6 meeting. It is also likely to revise up its inflation forecast for the year. Having said that, we expect it to hold on to an accommodative stance and continue to keep domestic liquidity at surplus..."

We hold on to our forecast of 50 bps further easing in the remainder of the cycle. While this remains our base case, if the sequential momentum in inflation does not decline as rapidly as

expected, we could see a more moderate easing of 25 bps."

Soumya Kanti Ghosh, group chief economic adviser at State Bank of India, said, "We believe an August rate cut is unlikely. With the 115 bps reduction in repo beginning February, banks have already transmitted 72 bps to the customers on fresh loans in the interregnum... This has happened because of a proactive RBI using liquidity among others as a tool to serve its policy objective. We believe that the MPC could now well debate what further unconventional policy measures could be resorted to in the current circumstances to ensure financial stability is continued to be addressed."

DK Joshi, chief economist at Crisil Ltd said, "We believe that growth concerns would still outweigh those on inflation and expect the RBI to cut repo rate by 25 basis points in its August policy."

TRAI QUIZZES AIRTEL, VODA FURTHER ON PRIORITY PLANS

New Delhi, Aug. 2: Not satisfied with responses submitted by Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea on priority plans, regulator Trai has shot off additional "technical" queries to both the telcos and asked them to explain their stand on August 4, a source said.

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) wants the two companies to substantiate their claims that the contentious priority offerings, which are under the regulator's lens, have neither deteriorated experience of other network users nor violated any norms.

Another source said that Bharti Airtel has been asked over two dozen questions, including if limits for data speeds have been set for platinum and non-platinum users, and about the levels of throughput for platinum users.

Trai sent out fresh sets of questions to both Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea on July 31, and the operators have been asked to respond to the questions on August 4.

Emails sent to Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea did not elicit a response.

Trai has said it is desirable that points raised in the questionnaire be covered in a presentation scheduled on the issue on the same day. The regulator has asked the companies to back their claims via data, the source said.

—PTI

LIC raises stake in heavyweights in Q1

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, AUG. 2

Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) raised shareholding in blue chip companies like SBI, Infosys, TCS, RIL, among others, during the April-June quarter following a sharp fall in the market in the second half of March 2020.

The shareholding pattern of the Sensex companies, as updated to the stock exchanges after the close of April-June quarter, also showed the Peoples Bank of China's stake in HDFC coming down to less than 1 per cent. In the January-March quarter the Chinese bank's stake in HDFC had gone up to 1.01 per cent, raising eyebrows.

LIC raised stake in HDFC in the April-June quarter from 4.67 per cent

Lapping up blue chips

Company	LIC shareholding (%) 2020	
	Jan-March	April-June
Infosys	6.62	7.19
HDFC Bank	3.04	3.48
SBI	9.24	9.98
HDFC	4.67	5.39
ICICI Bank	9.97	10.15
Bharti Airtel	2.73	2.78
Maruti	6.39	6.65
HCL Technologies	1.34	1.81
TCS	4.20	4.22
RIL	6.01	5.94*
Hero MotoCorp	1.46	1.70
Sun Pharma	6.37	6.56
UltraTech Cement	3.07	3.35

*LIC received over 2.48 crore partly paid RIL shares in the rights issue but total shareholding is a tad lower. Source: BSE, ICSE Research

to 5.39 per cent. As almost all blue chip companies' shares nosedived to 52-week and

multi-year lows due to panic created by the Covid-19 pandemic, LIC seems to have made contrarian calls and raised stake in most coveted companies.

Among the Sensex companies where the LIC holdings have gone up included HDFC, Infosys, Reliance Industries, Tata Consultancy Services, HDFC Bank, SBI, Hindustan Unilever, ICICI Bank, Bharti Airtel, Maruti Suzuki India, Ultratech Cement, Hero Motocorp, HCL Technologies, Asian Paints and Sun Pharmaceutical Industries.

Sensex companies where LIC's stake remained unchanged may be due to already high stake, included Larsen & Toubro (15.12 per cent), ITC (16.27 per cent), Mahindra & Mahindra (11.36 per cent).

Rise in No. of first-time buyers: Maruti

New Delhi, Aug. 2: The percentage of first-time buyers and additional car buying have increased in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic as customers prefer personal mobility over public transport, according to a Maruti Suzuki India official.

The firm also believes that while vehicle sales have improved in July, the outlook for the festive season will depend on how the health crisis pans out, and the long-term vehicle demand will depend on the economic fundamentals.



Shashank Srivastava

"First-time car buying is up and replacement buying is down, which means exchange is down. However, additional car buying is also up because

of the functionality requirement," Maruti Suzuki India Ltd executive director (sales and marketing) Shashank Srivastava said.

"People are preferring personal transport over public transport. At the same time their income levels are also probably going to be suppressed for sometime. Therefore, the trend is towards what we call 'telescoping of demand downwards', that is logical and intuitive. It is also reflecting in the data which we have so far," he said.

—PTI

Siemens Health enters cancer care with \$16.4 billion Varian acquisition

JÖRN POLTZ & DOUGLAS BUSVINE
MUNICH/BERLIN, AUG. 2

German health group Siemens Healthineers said on Sunday it was buying Varian Medical Systems Inc of the United States for \$16.4 billion in a deal that seeks to create the global leader in cancer care solutions.

The deal is the first major growth move by Healthineers since it was spun off and floated in 2018 by Siemens, which is undertaking a broader shakeup of its conglomerate structure to create room for its business units to do their own deals.

Siemens, which will retain control over Healthineers, will provide bridge financing for the deal that will be partly refinanced by a rights issue by the medical technology unit later this year.

Under the agreed transaction, Healthineers will acquire all shares in Varian for \$177.50 each in cash.

—Reuters

Start-ups queue up to deliver fuel at doorstep

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, AUG. 2

After food and grocery, fuel is also on the way to doorstep delivery. Door-to-door delivery of fuel is the new segment where hundreds of start-ups are expected to come up within a few months.

After state-owned oil marketing companies—Indian Oil Corporation, Bharat Petroleum Corporation and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation—called for expression of interest, hundreds of startups have evinced interest in running mobile petrol pumps. They have to get registered with the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) before starting their operations. The government had come out with a policy supporting mobile delivery of fuel last year.

Within a few months, these startups will be providing doorstep delivery of fuel. "If Swiggy and Zomato can bring food at



the doorstep, why can't startups deliver fuel? However, retail customers will have to wait, as the government has allowed mobile delivery of fuel for commercial purposes only for the time being," said Prasan Surana, founder and CEO of Synergy Teletech, which provides doorstep delivery of biodiesel.

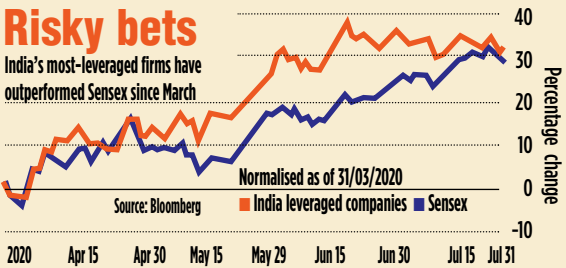
According to Chetan Walunj, CEO and co-founder of Repos Energy, almost 60 to 70 per cent of the fuel consumption happens in the commercial sector. Construction equipment, generator, agricultural equipment users who cannot come to the petrol pumps to get refilled will benefit from the mobile petrol pumps, which can carry 4,000-

6,000 litres of diesel. "In a few years, almost 30 per cent of the available market may move into doorstep delivery," said Adnan Kidwai, co-founder of Fuel Buddy, a start-up which was part of the pilot project of BPCL. Around 65,000 petrol pumps are estimated to be operating across the country. And about 35,000 pumps also may get added in the next few years, making India one of the largest in fuel networks.

The lower capital and operational expenses compared to traditional petrol pumps make the new venture attractive for fuel entrepreneurs. "Land cost and construction cost makes the capex of traditional pumps ten times higher than that of a mobile pump. Further, a mobile pump can work with just two employees," said Walunj.

"Once we start procuring diesel from the supply locations, the margins will be better than procuring fuel from the petrol pumps," said Kidwai.

Retail investors pile into beaten stocks



RONOJOY MAZUMDAR & ISHIKA MOOKERJEE
AUG. 2

Companies with high levels of debt are the latest beneficiaries of a retail investor-fuelled rally in Indian stocks that's defying the worst economic outlook in four decades.

A custom Bloomberg index of the 30 most leveraged stocks out of India's top 200 companies has gained 32 per cent since the end of March, compared with a 28 per cent advance in the benchmark S&P BSE Sensex. A basket of the 30 least leveraged companies—similarly compiled using debt-to-asset ratios and excluding lenders—has gained just 18

per cent. That's a big change from earlier in the year, when pandemic fears put a premium on companies with strong balance sheets and low net debt.

"The re-emergence of unsophisticated retail traders is at least in some part responsible for capital reallocation toward the most beaten down names," said Piyush Sharma, a fund manager and co-founder at Metis Capital Management Ltd.

There's little reason to believe bets on leveraged companies have become less risky. India is still reeling from a crisis in its financial system, and business activity remains subdued.

—Bloomberg

Acreage of major kharif crops

	July 31, 2019: 774.38	July 31, 2020: 799.95
Rice	223.96	266.60
Pulses	93.84	111.91
Coarse cereals	139.26	148.34
Oilseeds	150.12	175.34
Sugarcane	51.20	51.78
Jute & mesta	7.06	6.95
Cotton	108.95	121.25
Total sown area in lakh hectares		

Source: Ministry of Agriculture/KBK Infographics

SWEETS INDUSTRY MAY SUFFER ₹5,000 CR LOSS THIS RAKSHA BANDHAN

Indore, Aug 2: The sweets industry would suffer a financial loss of Rs 5,000 crore during this Raksha Bandhan festival due to the pandemic, an industry association claimed.

The director of the Federation of Sweets and Namkeen Manufacturers, Feroz H. Naqvi, told PTI, "Sweets worth around Rs 10,000 crore were sold across the country on

Raksha Bandhan last year. This figure expected to come down to around Rs 5,000 crore this time."

"The purchasing power of the customers is already affected," he said.

—PTI

SHORT TAKES

Kyrgios to give US Open a miss

Sydney: Nick Kyrgios has withdrawn from the US Open because of concerns over the Coronavirus and in honor of the "hundreds and thousands of Americans" who have died from Covid-19.

Kyrgios said in an *Instagram* post on Sunday that he had no problem with the United States Tennis Association proceeding with its plans to hold the tournament from August 31 to September 13.

But he cited health and safety concerns amid the Coronavirus pandemic as he joined fellow Australian and world No. 1 Ash Barty in opting out. "I will not be playing this year at the US Open. It hurts me at my core not to be out there competing in one of the sport's greatest arenas, Arthur Ashe Stadium," Kyrgios said in the video.

"But I'm sitting out for the people, for my Aussies, for the hundreds and thousands of Americans that have lost their lives, for all of you. It's my decision," he added. — AP

Infantino can lead Fifa, says body

London: Gianni Infantino can remain FIFA president and should not be forced from power while under criminal investigation, world football's governing body confirmed on Saturday.

A Swiss special prosecutor opened a criminal case into Infantino's conduct on Thursday over his meetings with the country's attorney general who has been leading a sprawling investigation into football corruption. "There is nothing preventing the president from performing his duties," FIFA said in a statement to the AP. "He will continue to fully assume his functions within FIFA."

"The FIFA president is subject to a criminal investigation by the Swiss judicial authorities," FIFA said, "but he has not been charged nor is he guilty of anything. ... FIFA and its President will continue to cooperate fully with the judicial authorities in Switzerland until these investigations are concluded." — AP

Daruvala fourth at Silverstone

Silverstone: India's Jehan Daruvala jumped six places in an action-packed final three laps to finish fourth in the sprint race here on Sunday, his best result so far in the FIA Formula 2 Championship. It was a much-needed result for Daruvala, who had to endure slow starts in the earlier races due to clutch issues including the feature race on Saturday, when he finished 12th after starting seventh on the grid.

The Indian driver, who is a Red Bull junior, overtook the feature race winner Nikita Mazepin on the final lap to secure eight points from the weekend, taking his overall tally to 18 points after four rounds of the Championship.

Dan Ticktum, who is also into his maiden Formula 2 season like Daruvala, won the race from pole position with another rookie, Christian Lundgaard, finishing second. Louis Deletraz was third.

— PTI

BAIRSTOW ON SONG AS ENGLAND WIN

Southampton: Opener Jonny Bairstow smashed 82 off 41 balls as England beat Ireland by four wickets in the second one-day international to take an unassailable 2-0 series lead. England overcame a middle-order wobble to finish on 216-6 in 32.3 overs in reply to Ireland's 212-9 at the Rose Bowl on Saturday.

After Adil Rashid had taken 3-34 to reach 150 ODI wickets, Bairstow equaled the record for the fastest 50 in this format by an Englishman off 21 balls.

Bairstow, Eoin Morgan and Moeen Ali were dismissed as England lurched from 131-3 to 137-6, before an unbroken 79-run stand between Sam Billings and David Willey.

The pair had been the stand-out performers in Thursday's opener and came to the rescue again. — AFP

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Gunners top shots

Aubameyang shines, Arsenal claim FA Cup

London, Aug. 2: Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang inspired Arsenal to a record 14th FA Cup win as the Gunners captain struck twice to beat Chelsea 2-1 in the final at an empty Wembley on Saturday.

Christian Pulisic had given Chelsea the dream start, but the Blues unravelled after Aubameyang was brought down by Cesar Azpilicueta inside the area and converted the resulting penalty.

A brilliant finish from Aubameyang 23 minutes from time earned Mikel Arteta silverware in his first season as Arsenal boss before Chelsea were controversially reduced to 10 men when Mateo Kovacic was shown an extremely soft second yellow card.

Arteta said ahead of the final he hoped a taste of success would encourage Aubameyang, who only has a year left on his contract at the Emirates, to commit to a new long-term deal.

The Gabon international's double took his tally for the season to 29 and ensured the Gunners will not miss out on European football next season for the first time since 1995/96 as they qualify for the Europa League.

Emiliano Martinez flew to his left to turn Mason Mount's shot behind, but Arsenal did not heed that warning as Chelsea's front three combined perfectly for the opener on five minutes.

Mount's low cross was flicked on by former Arsenal striker Olivier Giroud and Pulisic continued his scoring streak since football's return in June by showing quick feet before prodding the ball home.

Arteta has gained plenty of plaudits for his tactical nous during his first eight months in a managerial role and the Spaniard managed to reorganise the Gunners during the first-half drinks break to change the momentum of the game. — AFP



Arsenal's captain Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang (left) reacts after dropping the winners trophy as the team celebrate their 2-1 victory over Chelsea in the FA Cup final at the Wembley Stadium in London on Sunday. — AFP

Roma humble champs Juve

Milan, Aug. 2: Juventus crashed to their second consecutive defeat as the Italian league champions finished their season with a 1-3 home loss against Roma on Saturday, days before their Champions League campaign resumes.

Inter Milan took second place with a 2-0 win over Atalanta in Bergamo, who fell to their first league defeat since January.

Argentine Gonzalo Higuain spearheaded the Juventus attack and finished off an Adrian Rabiot cross after just six minutes in the Allianz Stadium.

But Diego Perotti inspired a Roma fightback



Ciro Immobile

setting up Nikola Kalinic to nod in the equaliser after 23 minutes.

Perotti gave Roma the lead from the penalty spot

before the break and six minutes into the second half connected with a Nicolò Zaniolo cross for his second of the night as

Juventus fell to their third defeat in four matches.

Inter Milan finish just one point behind the champions after winning the three-team race for second spot.

IMMOBILE TOPS ITALIAN SCORING CHARTS AGAIN

Lazio forward Ciro Immobile scored his 36th goal of the season on Saturday in a 3-1 defeat against Napoli to equal the record for the most goals in a Serie A campaign.

The 30-year-old tapped in after 22 minutes to match Argentina forward Gonzalo Higuain's record of 36 goals, set while playing for Napoli in the 2015-

16 season.

Immobile also wins the European Golden Shoe for the continent's top scorer this term, having overtaken Bayern Munich striker Robert Lewandowski's tally of 34 in midweek.

Fourteen of his goals were from the penalty spot, as Lazio finished the season in fourth place, earning a return to the Champions League.

It is the third time Immobile has won the title of best scorer in Italy after 2013-2014, when he scored 22 goals with Torino, and in 2017-2018 when his 29 goals for Lazio saw him share the honour with Inter Milan's Mauro Icardi. — AFP

Tokyo playing on Olympian minds

MOSES KONDETY | DC
HYDERABAD, AUG. 2

Had the contagious Covid not spread its vicious web around the world so thick and fast, P. V. Sindhu would be smashing shuttles to uproarious applause, Rajani Etimaru would be right in the middle of battle, literally dressed as a warrior fighting for medals of a different kind and Sania Mirza would be drilling forehand winners to the delight of rackets supporters at the Ariake Tennis Park in Tokyo right now.

Well, the virus has won the first round against the world, forcing postponement of the Olympics that were to be held in Japan from July 23 to August 8 this year. The sporting community has in a way conceded, and made the wise decision to live to fight another day... next year to be precise.

Tokyo is surely playing on the minds of Olympians though. "If not for this virus, we would have been in the middle of Olympics now," badminton world champion P. V. Sindhu broods.

"Nobody expected this. We had worked hard and were prepared to go out there and do our best," rues Rajani, goalkeeper of the Indian women's hockey team, before adding "But sportspersons are trained mentally to move on and look ahead to the future challenges and that's what we are doing now, preparing to come back stronger next year."

Multiple Grand Slam winner Sania has accepted things as they are and is not "gonna sit and dwell on it."

"There's nothing in our control... we just have to work around it. Hopefully, this will end soon and we all will come back to a certain new normal at least. One year is a really long time for an athlete... it can ruin a lot of careers.



P. V. Sindhu

Hopefully we will still be fit enough and young enough to play the Olympics next year," the 33-year-old adds.

"They are upset alright but nobody's complaining though."

"When they announced the postponement I was disturbed but then it was the best decision in the interest of everyone. I took it in a positive way and told myself to work harder for another year to be prepared for the big event. It's an everyday process where you give your 100 per cent all the time," Sindhu says.

She knows it's a Hobson's choice. "Right now, we haven't even started playing and we don't know what the situation is going to be in the next few months. I guess the social distancing, wearing of masks and sanitising will continue for a while even after this virus is gone. I think we need to understand that the situation is very bad all around the world and realise that we are dealing with a deadly virus," the 25-year-old says.

Amidst the gloom, Sindhu also sees the bright side. "The positive to take out of this home confinement is that I am able to spend time with



Sania Mirza

my parents and nephew. I am also learning painting and cooking, it's kind of nice and I enjoy that. I've never had such a big

break," she bursts out laughing.

Another badminton ace Sai Praneeth plays a similar line. "If everything

was okay, we would have been playing at the sporting world's biggest stage. Now we have to wait for one more year, which is a long time, for we don't know what might happen during that period. It's definitely not good but the situation is not in our hands. We just need to be positive going forward and hope for the best. It is a setback mentally because we give it our all to prepare for such big events," says the 27-year-old who is comfortably placed in the qualification race at No.13 in men's singles where the top 16 are assured of an automatic place.

Dashing doubles player Rankireddy Satwiksairaj was full of beans when the can of Corona worms spilled over. At No.10, Satwik and his partner Chirag Shetty are poised to make the main draw. "It would have been my first Olympics," the 19-year-old sulks.

"To win a medal at the Olympics is a dream for any sportsperson. I know of many big players who had planned to bow out after the 2020 Games. Alas, they will have to drag on for another year, which is not easy," Satwik says, encapsulating the idiom so near, yet so far.

INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE

Council retains China sponsors

New Delhi, Aug. 2: The Indian Premier League's Governing Council on Sunday decided to retain all its sponsors, including Chinese mobile company VIVO, and approved Covid-19 replacements in the event to be held in UAE this year.

The tournament will be played from September 19 to November 10, the IPL GC decided after a virtual meeting on Sunday.

"All I can say is that all our sponsors are with us. Hopefully you can read between the lines," an IPL GC member said.

Chinese sponsorship became a bone of contention after the clashes between the Indian and Chinese troops in eastern Ladakh in June. The BCCI had promised to review the deals post the showdown.

In another major decision, the IPL GC also approved the women's IPL. The IPL will allow unlimited Covid-19 replacements considering the delicate health safety situation across the globe.

"We expect the the Home and External Affairs Ministry to give us necessary approvals within another week. The final will be played on November 10 as it enters

● **The Governing Council of the IPL decided to retain all its sponsors, including a Chinese phone manufacturer, approved Covid-19 replacements and host women's matches too during the IPL to be played in UAE from Sept. 19 to November 10.**

the Diwali week making it lucrative for the broadcasters," the IPL GC member said.

It would have been difficult to get new sponsors for the Board at a short notice given.

It is expected that the squad strength in terms of playing members will be 24 the eight franchises.

"Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is still being prepared but there would be any number of Covid replacements this year."

"Also the BCCI has received presentations from a DUBAI based group on creating a medical facility in the UAE. The BCCI is also in talks with the Tata Group for creating a bio-bubble," he said. — PTI



Lewis Hamilton of Mercedes punctures his left front tyre near the finish of the Formula One British Grand Prix at the Silverstone motor racing circuit in Silverstone, central England, on Sunday. — AFP

Hamilton wins on three tyres

Silverstone, Aug. 2: Lewis Hamilton held on to win the British Grand Prix on Sunday despite a puncture on the last lap to clinch an 87th career win and move within four of Michael Schumacher's Formula One record.

The championship leader's record-extending seventh Silverstone win saw him finish six seconds ahead of Red Bull's Max Verstappen, who unexpectedly moved up a place after Hamilton's Mercedes teammate Valtteri Bottas sustained a puncture with three laps left.

With Hamilton so far ahead, Verstappen went in for a tire change in a bid to gain an extra point for the fastest lap but that pit stop ultimately cost him victory because Hamilton's front left shredded with half a lap to go. Verstappen swallowed up most of the 25-second gap but ran out of time. Charles Leclerc finished third for Ferrari.

When his tire melted, Bottas had to come back for a tire change and dropped out of the points altogether into 11th spot and 30 points behind Hamilton in the title race.

Sebastian Vettel, a four-time F1 champion, placed 10th and has now failed to

● **Lewis Hamilton, racing for Mercedes, overcame a flat left front tyre in the final lap of the Silverstone Grand Prix to claim an unprecedented seventh win at his home Grand Prix.**

get into the top five for his worst start to a season since 2008.

McLaren's Carlos Sainz Jr. also sustained a puncture on the last lap and fell to 13th.

There is another race at Silverstone next Sunday. Earlier, the British Grand Prix was forced to run behind a safety car on Sunday after an opening lap crash.

Kevin Magnussen of Haas collided with Alex Albon's Red Bull at the final corner, the Danish driver spinning off into the gravel after trying to squeeze past the Thai driver.

The front left wheel of his Haas car was smashed off after the impact as he attempted to cut across Albon at the apex of the corner leading on to the straight. — Agencies

RAPTORS LAY LAKERS LOW IN NBA BIG GAME

Miami, Aug. 2: Kyle Lowry scored 33 points and grabbed 14 rebounds, sparking the defending NBA champion Toronto Raptors to a 107-92 win over the Los Angeles Lakers in a showdown of title contenders on Saturday.

Lakers star LeBron James scored 20 points and pulled down 10 rebounds while Anthony Davis added 14 points, but the Lakers suffered their worst shooting performance of the season, hitting 29-of-82 shots, 35.8 per cent, from the floor.

The Lakers-Raptors matchup was the feature contest on the third day of regular-season contests in a bubble quarantine atmosphere at Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida, as the NBA restarts after a four-month Covid-19 shutdown.

Toronto began the game with a 13-0 run as the Lakers went 4-51 before scoring their first points, their longest scoreless start in any game this season.

But after going 0-for-7 from the floor, the Lakers went on a 9-of-15 run and had pulled within 23-21 by the end of the first quarter. — AFP