THE ASIAN AGE

NATION 4

PM remembers an 'articulate voice for India at world stage' on Sushma's first death anniv



SPORT 8

'Slim to none': Kyrgios drops a huge hint that he will skip French Open TABLOID 11

Cameron Diaz, who retired from acting as soon as she hit her 40s, is at peace with her life



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Mercedes' British driver Lewis Hamilton arrives ahead of previews for the F1 70th anniversary Grand Prix at Silverstone in Northampton on

TV actor Sameer Sharma found hanging at home

Mumbai: Television actor Sameer Sharma allegedly committed suicide at his home in suburban Malad. The 44-year-old was found hanging from a ceiling fan in the kitchen of his flat at Neha building in Chincholi **Bunder locality in Malad** (west) on Wednesday night. Sharma has worked in popular serials like Yeh Rishta Hai Pyar Ke and Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi. The actor was living alone in the rented flat since February. Full report on Page 3

Rohtang Tunnel: PM

to open in late Sept

Dharamshala: PM Narendra Modi is expected to inaugurate the 8.8-km-long Rohtang tunnel, being built on the Leh-Manali highway, in the last week of September, Himachal Pradesh CM Jai Ram Thakur said. He said the tunnel will give all-weather connectivity to the remote and border areas of the state. - PTI Full report on Page 4

MP & Punjab spar

over basmati GI taq

Bhopal: MP CM Shivrai Singh Chouhan on Thursday slammed his Punjab counterpart Capt. Amrinder Singh for mounting pressure on the Centre to deny geographical indication tagging of basmati of MP, describing it unfair. Full report on Page 3

COUNTERPOINT



Not medical reports, we have to check their bank statements before starting treatment!





Max: 34°C Min: 28°C **RH:** 71% **Rain: 20%**

Forecast: Partly cloudy

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana Tithi: Shravana Bahula Chaturthi till 2.07 am Star: Purvabhadra till 1.34 pm Varjyam: 12.14 am to 2 am Durmuhurtam: 8.33 am to 9.23 am; 12.47 pm to 1.38 pm **Rahukalam:** 10.30 am to noon **SUNSET TODAY 7.07 PM**

SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.46 AM MOONRISE TOMORROW 9.37 AM MOONSET TODAY 8.51 PM

Militants kill BJP sarpanch in J&K, rush to quit party

YUSUF JAMEEL SRINAGAR, AUG. 6

The killing of a village head associated with the BJP in southern Kulgam by suspected militants on Thursday triggered a new wave of resignations by party activists across the Kashmir

Valley. Over half a dozen BJP workers took to social media platforms to say they were dissociating from the party. Some even sought forgiveness from the militants.

The police said at about 9.30 am militants shot and critically wounded BJP sarpanch Sajad Ahmad Khanday in Vesoo village of Qazigund area in Vallam "He was imme." Kulgam. "He was immediately evacuated to Anantnag's Government Medical College Hospital, but succumbed to his injuries," the police said. The hospital's medical superintendent, Dr Muhammad Iqbal Sofi, said Khanday was brought dead to the hospital.

The police said the slain sarpanch feared a threat to his life and was given accommodation in a "secure camp" for Kashmiri Pandit migrants at Vesoo, "but today he went to his (native) house without informing the police"



A landslide triggered due to heavy rains at Pedder Road in Mumbai on Thursday. Nearly 150 incidents of tree collapse were reported from across the metropolis, crushing several vehicles, but there was no report of any casualty. ■ Report on Page 4 — RAJESH JADHAV

Manoj Sinha new Kashmir L-G: Govt's political signal

AGE CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs NEW DELHI/SRINAGAR,

The Centre's decision appoint former minister of state for railways

Manoj Sinha as Jammu and Kashmir's new lieutenant-governor, replac-ing G.C. Murmu (who on Thursday was named the next Comptroller and Auditor-General, in place of Rajiv Mehrishi, who retires on August 7), is to send a clear signal that it

Former L-G Murmu named as next CAG

wants to restart the J&K political process. Sources said PM Narendra Modi was keen

that a "seasoned politician" than someone with a bureaucratic or military/intelligence background be made the new lieutenant-governor. Home ministry sources said in order to restart the political process, the government wanted an experienced politician as the UT's administrative head. Sinha reached

evening by a state plane, soon after his predecessor flew out, and is likely to be administered the oath of office on Friday. He held an informal meeting with the chief secretary

and the four advisers to the former L-G. Mr Sinha is a three-time Lok Sabha MP who lost the 2019 election from Gorakhpur. He is said to enjoy the confidence of both PM Modi and home minister Amit Shah. In 2017, he was a frontrunner for the post of UP chief minister after the party swept the 2017 polls.

■ Move instigated by Pak, no support at UN: MEA

India warns China to halt meddling in J&K

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI

Hours after China raised the Kashmir issue at the 15-member UN Security Council at the behest of its all-weather friend Pakistan, India on Thursday said it rejected China's interference in India's internal affairs, adding that China's attempt once again "met with little support from the international community." nity". New Delhi also "urged" Beijing "to draw the proper conclusions from such infructuous attempts". This is the sec-ond time in two days India criticised China for its comments and actions

on the Kashmir issue. Making no secret of the close collaboration between China and Pakistan, Pakistan foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi tweeted Wednesday night that this was the third time in the past year that it was raised at the UN, thanking China "especially", saying Pakistan "welcomed" the meet.

The Chinese move in collaboration with Pakistan was obviously planned at the UN on the first anniversary of India's revoking Article 370, that granted special status to

'Pak must refrain from

Islamic Republic of

Pakistan on a matter internal to India. It should desist from inter-

fering in India's affairs

and refrain from com-

munal incitement. While this is not a sur-

prising stance from a nation that practices cross-border terrorism

and denies its own

minorities their reli-

gious rights, such com-

communal incitement³

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, AUG. 6

A day after Pakistan "condemned" the move to build a temple dedicated to Lord Ram at the site where the Babri Masjid once stood, New Delhi asked Islamabad to "desist from interfering in India's affairs and refrain from communal incitement". The MEA said, "We have seen the press statement by the

'We have noted China ini-

UN Security Council on

internal matter of India.

attempt too met with little

began

ments are nevertheless deeply regrettable." the erstwhile Jammu and support from the international community. We firmly reject China's Kashmir state. China first raising Kashmir issue last year at interference in our interthe UNSC for informal nal affairs and urge it to deliberations soon after draw proper conclusions India revoked Article 370. from such infructuous

On Thursday, the external affairs ministry said: attempts."
India had on Wednesday too snubbed China, asktiated a discussion in the ing it to refrain from interference in India's internal affairs, hours after Beijing termed the revoking of Article 370 a issues pertaining to the Union territory of J&K. This was not the first time year ago by New Delhi as China has sought to raise a subject that is solely an ʻillegal and invalid". India added that China As on such occasions, this had no locus standi on the

RBI holds rates, allows loans to be restructured

FALAKNAAZ SYED

While the Reserve Bank of India held interest rates steady Thursday and disappointed borrowers by not extending the loan moratorium in its monetary policy, it announced a one-time restructuring of loans for personal loan borrowers, corporate borrowers and micro, small and medium enterprises hit by the Covid-19 pandemic. The restructuring will be allowed under the prudential framework issued on June 7, 2019, governor

Shaktikanta Das said.

Mr Das said: "The disruptions caused by Covid-19 have led to heightened financial stress for borrowers across the board... Accordingly, it has been decided to provide a window under the 7 June Prudential Framework to enable lenders to implement a resolution plan in respect of eligible corporate exposures, without change in ownership, as well as personal loans,



ing such exposures as standard assets, subject to speccondiified S. Das tions.' Personal

loans include those given

to individuals and include consumer credit, education loans, loans given for the creation or enhancement of immovable assets and loans given for investment in financial assets like shares and debentures, under RBI's rules. Under the RBI's Resolu-

tion Framework for Covid-related Stress, the resolution of stressed personal loans will be available only to those who repaid their loans regularly till March 1, 2020. The borrowers' acc-ounts will continue to be classified as standard till the date of invocation of the resolution. "The resolution may be invoked not later than December 31. 2020 and must be implemented within 90 days." More on Page 7

MoD removes 'China intrusion' docu from website

PAWAN BALI NEW DELHI, AUG. 6

The defence ministry on Thursday took down a document from its website that had for the first time officially acknowledged that Chinese troops had "transgressed" in at least three places in Ladakh and said the situation in the area due to "aggression by China" was "sensitive", with the standoff likely to be "pro-

There was no official word why the document uploaded on Tuesday was

removed after two days. This comes as the fourth and fifth round of corps commanders' talks between India and China

seems to have been unable to reach any major breakthrough on further disengagement in Pangong Tso and other friction areas. The government is yet to

come out with any statement on the outcome of the fifth corps commanders' meeting last Sunday, that indicate difference between China and India on disengagement.

China has refused to move out its troops from

NO OFFICIAL word why the docu uploaded on Tuesday was removed after two days

THIS COMES as the tourth & fifth round of corps commanders' talks between India and China seems to have been unable to reach any major breakthrough on further disengagement in Pangong Tso

Pangong Tso's Finger area and the Depsang-Daulat Beg Oldie sector.

and other friction areas

The defence ministry document had said Chinese aggression has been increasing along the LAC and particularly in Galwan Valley since May 5.

'The Chinese side trans-

gressed in the areas of Kugrang Nala, Gogra and north bank of Pangong Tso lake on 17-18 May," said. It added while engagement and dialogue at the military and diplomatic levels were continuing, "the present standoff is likely to be prolonged". Congress leader Rahul Gandhi continued his attack on the Narendra

handling of the Ladakh situation and said in a tweet: "Denying China is in our territory and removing documents from websites change the facts. Sources said China built

Modi government over its

up its forces not only in Ladakh but all along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). Army Chief Gen. Manoj

Mukund Naravane is on a two-day visit to Tezpur and Lucknow to review the situation along the Chinese border in the Northeast.

■ Covid-19: India crosses 20-lakh mark with 62K cases in 24 hrs

Govt releases ₹890cr aid to states/UTs

NEW DELHI/HYDERABAD,

AGE CORRESPONDENTS

Thursday on became the third country in the world to have the unenviable record of having 20 lakh novel coronavirus infections. According to www.worldometers and covid19india.org, India reported 62,099 new Covid-19 cases Thursday, the highest ever, taking the caseload India, which crossed the 10 lakh-mark on July 17, reported doubling of the cases in just 20 days.

With 19,119,885 cases reported worldwide, this puts India's case load at about 10 per cent, though its total death count, at 41,634, is about six per cent of the total lives lost to the pandemic.
According to the Indian

government, however, the country recorded 56,000 cases on Thursday. government

COVID WATCH CASES ACROSS NATION

Thursday released Rs 890.32 crore as the second instalment of the Covid-19 Emergency Response and Health System Preparedness package to 22 states and UTs. The

amount for each state/UT is based on their Covid-19 caseload. The spurt in virus infections is mainly in states like Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Covid-19, which was mostly an urban phenomenon in the initial days, has spread to the hinterland after guest workers moved back to their villages or hometowns. India had registered one lakh cases on May 18, 108 days after the first case was

reported on January 30.

Putin may visit India for summit in October

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, AUG. 6

President

Russian

Vladimir Putin is expected to visit India in October this year for the annual bilateral summit between the two countries, New Delhi said Thursday. India said "regional and international issues of interest" are being discussed in exchanges between the two countries, a veiled indication perhaps to the ongoing Sino-Indian military standoff. India has time-tested strategic ties with Russia over decades, especially in the defence sector, but Russia also has close ties with China.

On Tuesday, foreign secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla and Russian deputy foreign minister Igor Morgulov held a telephonic conversation on high-level exchanges between both sides. It may be recalled that a month ago Prime Minister Narendra Modi had spoken to President Putin and "conveyed his keenness to welcome President Putin in India' for this year's summit.

Rajapaksas sweep Lanka House polls, Mahinda to be back as PM

Colombo, Aug. 6: When Mahinda Rajapaksa was vanquished in Sri Lanka's presidential elections in 2015, many thought the shrewd leader, known for his brutal military campaign against the Tamil

Tigers, was a spent force. But five years later, the 74-year-old leader is back at the top in Sri Lankan politics along with his three siblings, winning the general elections held

on Wednesday. However, it has not been a smooth sailing for Mr Rajapaksa, a veteran PAGE 4

Modi congratulates Lanka counterpart on successful conduct of polls amid Covid crisis

street-fighter politician who entered Parliament when he was just 24. After losing the seat in 1977, he focused on his law career reentering Parliament in 1989. Mr Rajapaksa served as

labour minister (1994

2001) and minister of fish-

eries and aquatic resources (1997 2001)

Chandrika Kumaratunga, who appointed him as PM after the general election of April 2004, when the United People's Freedom Alliance won a majority.

He was chosen as the Sri Lanka Freedom Party's presidential nominee in November 2005. Shortly after his victory in the election, Mr Rajapaksa announced his intention to crush the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, which had established a de facto government in north Sri Lanka.



French President Emmanuel Macron talks to people during a visit to the Gemmayzeh neighbourhood of Beirut on Thursday. The neighbourhood has suffered extensive damage due to a massive explosion in Beirut which has claimed the 157 lives so far.



SHORT TAKES

2 held for beating

man to death

New Delhi: A 22-year-old man was beaten to death allegedly by two brothers who suspected him of stealing mobile phones and cash from their truck, police said on Thursday. The two men -Sandeep (30) and Sanjeev (32) have been arrested by the police. The deceased has been identified as Vishal, a resident of Haiderpur village in northwest Delhi, police said. The incident was reported to police on August 2. The man was caught by the two brothers at the Azadpur Mandi as they suspected that he had stolen cash and mobiles from their truck. After beating him up, they tied his hands and legs threw him in the truck and started for Himachal Pradesh's Bilaspur district, from where they hail. However, when the truck was stopped by a policeman for traffic violation on northwest GTK road, the tied-up man was found in the back of the vehicle. The local police were informed who in turn rushed the man to the BSA hospital where he was declared brought dead. DCP (Northwest) Vijayanta Arya said, "We have registered a case under relevant sections of IPC at Mahendra Park police station and both the

2 men arrested

accused drivers have been

arrested and sent to jail.

for stabbing man New Delhi: Two persons have been arrested here for allegedly stabbing a man and looting his bag containing ₹40 lakh cash, police said on Wednesday. Deepak Kumar (35) and Sandeep Kumar (28), both residents of Ashok Vihar were in need of money and planned to commit loot in Old Delhi market where many people come on two-wheelers to collect cash. The duo executed their plan on July 31 and did a recce in Chandni Chowk a day before the incident, police said. They target-

ed one Vikas (40) after hearing him telling someone on mobile phone that he had collected payment and was on his way. Deepak and Sandeep followed Vikas on their two-wheeler and on reaching Geeta Colony flyover, they waylaid him and tried to snatch his cash bag, police said. When Vikas resisted. Sandeep allegedly stabbed him multiple times, robbed the bag containing cash and fled from the spot along with Deepak

Leaders pays tribute

to Sushma Swaraj New Delhi: On the first death anniversary of former Indian external affairs minister Sushma Swaraj, a virtual event named Sushmanjali was organised. The event was a joint initiative by Nation First Collective, Sanskar Bharati Northeast, and Sanskriti Ganga Nyas. The programme was presided over by Prakash Javadekar, the minister of information and broadcasting. Bansuri Swaraj, the daughter of Sushmaii, had a special presence in the virtual event. Apart from this, India's famous writers, artists, and filmmakers also participated in the event. Well known personalities such as Mohanlal. Prasoon Joshi, Subhash Ghai, Anoop Jalota, Madhur Bhandarkar, Kavita Krishnamurthy, Kangana Ranaut, Amisha Patel, and Isha Gupta were a part of the event, Sameer Anian, Kamlesh Pande, Priyadarshan, Kuldeep Singh, Shatrughan Sinha, Gajendra Chauhan, and Mukesh Khanna were the dignitaries from the film industry who were also a part of the event. Director Priyadarshan

Jobless man hangs self in Noida flat

was the chairman of the organising committee for the

Noida: A 48-year-old man, who lost his job in March, was found dead at his home in Noida on Thursday in an apparent case of suicide, police said. The man lived with his wife and son in a flat in Sector 82 and worked in the administration department of an IT company in Sector 63, the police said. "His body was found hanging through a 'chunni' from the ceiling of a room in his flat in an apparent case of suicide. He had lost his job in March. The body has been sent for post mortem," an officer from the local Phase 2 Police Station said. Police were alerted about the case at around 2 pm when the man's wife and son, who had gone to visit their relatives returned home,

another officer said.

12-year-old brutally raped at her home, 1 held

Minor had a fracture on her skull and her intestine was ruptured ■ Girl stable after 2 surgeries: AIIMS

BHASKAR HARI SHARMA NEW DELHI, AUG. 6

A 12-year-old girl was allegedly sexually assault-ed in west Delhi's Paschim Vihar area. The accused also hit her face and head with a sharp object at her home, police said. According to the doctors, the girl has a fracture on her skull and her intestine was ruptured, indicating injury by a foreign object. The Delhi Police on Thursday arrested a 33year-old man in connection with the assault, officials said. The accused, identified as Krishan, was identified on the basis of CCTV footage and has a criminal record, they said.

"On Tuesday, a 12-year-old child was assaulted. A case under POCSO (Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act) was registered. More than 20 teams were formed. The teams scanned hundreds of CCTV footages and interrogated all the suspects who have a similar background. Finally, the accused was arrested on Thursday," joint commissioner of police (west)
Shalini Singh said.
"During his interrogation, he has corroborated

the sequence of events leading to the assault on the child. Krishan has four criminal cases, including one murder, one attempt to murder as well as burglary, against him. We are fur-ther investigating," Mr

Singh said. The victim was taken to Sanjay Gandhi Memorial Hospital. After preliminary treatment, she was shifted to AIIMS for fur-

Delhi BJP expresses shock, Cong workers wave black flags at CM

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, AUG. 6

Delhi Congress workers waived black flags and raised slogans against chief minister Arvind Kejriwal when he arrived at AIIMS on Thursday to meet the 12-year-old girl who was allegedly assaulted while the BJP's city unit expressed shock over the incident and

over the incident and said it will provide financial aid to her family.

The Delhi Congress leaders, including state president Anil Kumar, also submitted a memorandum to the LG office, domanding a CRI onquiry. demanding a CBI enquiry in the case.

Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta also said he was "deeply shocked to learn about the "heinous" assault on the girl.

he has assured that the culprits will be caught soon. I also enquired about the health of the girl and AIIMS authorities told me she is stable now," Mr Gupta said. Delhi BJP will also extend financial help to

"I have talked to the

police commissioner and

the family of the victim, he said. The Delhi Congress president met the family members of the girl at AIIMS and assured them of provid-Congress will spare no

effort in getting them justice. The condition of the girl's parents is very pathetic as they have neither taken a bath, nor changed their clothes for the past three days, as they have been keeping vigil outside the ICU in AIIMS," Mr Kumar said.

ther treatment.

Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal, who also visited the hospital, said the brutality inflicted on the girl has "shaken is soul" and the government will hire the best lawyers to bring the guilty to justice. He also announced an ex-gratia of ₹10 lakh for the girl's family.

"She has suffered severe injuries but after 2 surgeries her condition is stable now. She was operated late on Tuesday night. She is in the ward and on oxygen support,"

the doctor said.

Besides the sexual assault, the girl was hit on the face and head with a sharp object. She was found lying in a pool of blood by her neighbours at her home in Paschim Vihar on Tuesday evening, according to police.
"The girl has multiple

head fractures and bite marks all over her body. She has been brutally assaulted to the extent that there are injury marks on every part of her body," DCW chief Swati



Congress workers stage a protest demanding justice for a 12-year-old girl, who was sexually assaulted and brutally injured, during chief minister Arvind Kejriwal's visit to AIIMS to meet the survivor in New Delhi on Thursday. - PTI

Women & child rights activists express outrage

New Delhi, Aug. 6: Women and child rights activists on Thursday expressed outrage over the sexual assault of a 12year-old girl at her west Delhi home, saying vulnerability of children has increased during the

coronavirus pandemic. The minor girl was also hit on the face and head with a sharp object. She was found lying in a pool of blood by her neighbours at her home in Paschim Vihar on Paschim Vihar on Tuesday evening, according to police.

"A shameful case of rape of the girl has come to light. This incident has again shamed humanity and showed the kind of hatred that exists against women in the society. Those who do it should be hanged," Women rights

incident, officials said.

Child rights activists raised concerns over the safety of children during the COVID-19 pandemic and said they have become highly vulnerable during this time.

tweeted.

One person was arrested in connection with the

women, elderly or persons with disability is a grave concern and the pandemic has definitely increased vulnerability in several ways, said Anant Asthana.

"It is a time when preventive measures are needed like never before. activist Yogita Bhayana Community vigil and social solidarity will be an effective shield for protection.

"It is timely that state agencies concerned with welfare of these sections gear up fast on prevention and involve police and community in plan-

grammes. I feel this incident should prompt us to think of innovative ways of improving our protec-

tive safety net," he added. Activist Krishnan concurred with Asthana and said there has also been an increase in child sexual abuse online. She said the economic devastation and the uncertainty brought about by the situation has contributed to the increase in crimes against children who are highly vulnerable.

'Allow hotels, gyms, weekly markets to reopen'

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, AUG. 6

The Delhi government has again sent a proposal to Lt governor Anil Baijal to allow hotels, gymnasi-um and weekly markets to reopen, saying that the coronavirus situation has been improving in the national capital, sources said on Thursday.

The government said that in accordance with the unlock guidelines issued by the Centre, it have been increasing in has right to take decision several states and situa-

PARMOD KUMAR

The Centre, on Thursday,

told the court that the for-

eigners who had attended

Tablighi Jamaat congrega-

tion at Nizamuddin in

March this year, in viola-

tion of their visa condi-

tions, can leave the coun-

Solicitor general Tushar Mehta told a three judge

bench headed by Justice

A.M. Khanwilkar that var-

ious cases pending before

different courts can be consolidated and heard by

Telling the court that the

trial in the cases can be

expedited and completed

in a month or two, the

solicitor general did not

NEW DELHI, AUG. 6

try pending trial.

one court.

IN ITS proposal, the Aam Aadmi Party government said that the cases of coronavirus have been increasing in several states and situation is frequently deteriorating, but hotels, gyms and weekly have been allowed there

to allow such establishments in Delhi. In its proposal, the Aam

Justice Khanwilkar won-

dered how could the peti-

tioners leave the country if

the trials continue and

The court decided to

record the solicitor gener-

al's assurances that the foreigners can leave India

during the pendency of

trials, after filling appro-

plea filed by 34 foreign

nationals challenging the

decision of the ministry of

home affairs (MHA) to

blacklist over 3,000 of them from travelling to

India for a period of 10

34 petitioners, 24 have

opted for plea bargaining

by paying fine and they

Mr Mehta said that out of

The bench was hearing a

priate affidavits.

more charges are added.

Aadmi Party government said that the Covid cases

Tablighi foreigners can leave India

despite pending trials: Centre to SC

tion is frequently deteriorating, but hotels, gyms and weekly have been allowed there. The sources said that

the government also sought to know from the L-G as to why Delhiites are being stopped from earning their livelihood despite the fact that the number of coronavirus cases has been decreasing

"The Delhi government has again sent proposals to the lieutenant governor to allow hotels, gymnasi-

in the national capital.

ums and weekly markets in the city," the sources also said.

In its 'Unlock-3' guide-lines issued on July 29, the Centre had allowed opening of yoga institutes and gymnasiums from August 5, but no fresh order has been issued by authorities in Delhi to permit functioning of these establishments.

Last week, the Arvind Kejriwal government had decided to allow hotels and weekly markets to reopen in Delhi. However. Lt governor Anil Baijal had overturned the government's decision.

In his recent letter to Union home minister Amit Shah, deputy chief Minister Manish Sisodia had sought his direction to L-G Baijal to allow hotels and weekly markets in the national capi-

In the letter. Sisodia had also said that the AAP government would again send the proposal to L-G Baijal to allow reopening of such establishments.

1,299 fresh Covid cases take Delhi's tally to 1,41,531 ▶ 15 FATALITIES due to

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, AUG. 6

Delhi recorded 1,299 fresh coronavirus cases on Thursday, taking the infection tally in the city to over 1.41 lakh, while the death toll due to the disease mounted to 4,059,

authorities said. Fifteen fatalities due to Covid were recorded in the last 24 hours, accord ing to the latest bulletin released by the health department Thursday.

The city recorded 1,076 fresh Covid cases and 11 deaths on Wednesday.

The number of active cases rose to 10,348 on Thursday from 10,072 the previous day. On June 23, the nation-

al capital had reported the highest single-day spike of 3,947 cases.
The death toll from the

coronavirus infection has risen to 4,059 and the total number of cases has climbed to 1,41,531 in Delhi, the bulletin said.

The positive rate stood at 6.3 per cent on Thursday, while the recovery rate was over 89 per cent, it said.

Out of the total number of beds in coronavirus hospitals, 10,547 are vacant. Also, 2,545 beds in

Covid care centres are

33cr Indian students will keep

on Thursday, while the recovery rate was over 89 per cent. occupied by quarantine,

Covid were recorded in

the last 24 hours. The

rose to 10,348 on

number of active cases

Thursday from 10,072 the

previous day. The positive

rate stood at 6.3 per cent

nave returned from abroad, it said.

According letin, 1,27,124 patients have recovered, been discharged or migrated so far. The number of people in home isolation

stood at 5,244. The number of Rapid Antigen Tests conducted on Thursday stood at 14,699 while the RT-PCR, CBNAAT and True NAAT tests figures were 5,737, in all adding to 20,436, according to the

bulletin.
The total number of tests done till date in Delhi was 11,20,318.

The number of tests done per million as on Thursday was 58,964, it said.

The number of containment zones stood at 466, according to the lat-

The meet was hosted by

Jindal

can go home. The lookout accept the suggestion from Monsoon clouds hover over the Parliament House after sunset in New Delhi on the petitioners' lawyers notice in their case has for disposing off the cases. Sadia Dehlvi, Sufi author, activist dies at 63

New Delhi, Aug. 6: Author, activist, food connoisseur and raconteur, Delhi's very own Sadia Dehlvi, whose name itself reflected her bond with the city, has died after a prolonged battle with breast cancer.

Dehlvi, meaning 'one from Delhi', died on Wednesday at her home and is survived by her son Arman Ali Dehlvi. She was

Belonging to a family whose association with the city went back centuries, Dehlvi's Twitter profile read, "Columnist and author Sufism: The Heart of Islam & The Sufi Courtyard: Dargahs of Delhi. I live in Delhi, a city

Dehlvi, who wrote about women, minorities, Islamic spirituality and Delhi's heritage and culture for more than 40 years, was laid to rest on Thursday at the city's Shidipura ceme-



Sadia Dehlvi

grammes,

friend and confidante of

A woman of many talents, Dehlvi also produced and scripted documentaries and television proincluding 'Amma and Family" (1995), with veteran actor Zohra Sehgal in the lead. She was also a close

the late Khushwant Singh, who dedicated his book Not a Nice Man to Know to her. 'To Sadia Dehlvi, who gave me more affection and notoriety than I deserve,' he wrote. Singh's book Men

and Women in my Life,

which has a chapter dedi-

cated to her, also has Dehlvi's photo on its cover. "Hers was a very illustrious family... I won't be exaggerating one bit if I tell you that the family was always leading from the front to keep Urdu alive in India," Yasir Abbasi, who used Dehlvi's help for his book *Yeh Un Dinon ki Baat* Hai, told PTI. Dehlvi, who belonged to the royal Shama family, edited the Urdu women's journal Bano. Her grandfather Hafiz Yusuf Dehlvi founded the iconic Urdu film and

"Under the Shama group, they launched other periodicals as well, including Bano and Khilona. Today we can't even imagine how popular the magazine Shama was. It was found in Urdu speaking household," Abbasi said. Dehlvi was passionate about food, much like her

literary month Shama in

which famously family, Bollywood stars hosted such as Dilip Kumar, Raj Kapoor and Reĥman in their palatial 'haveli'

"The Dehlvis' spacious house Shama Kothi in Delhi's tony diplomatic enclave of Chanakyapuri had become home to many visiting film stars. Their parties were the talk of fown. Food was something that the family was very passionate about. Sadia often talked about the many kebabs they used to serve in those parties, said Abbasi. In 1979, Dehlvi founded Al Kauser, the Chanakyapuri restaurant famous for its kebabs, with her mother. At the age of 60, she donned the hat of a chef and tied up with ITC to celebrate the capital's authentic cuisine over a six-day dinner buffet festival - Delhi Table spread.

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, AUG. 6

Union education minister Ramesh 'Nishank", inaugurating Jindal Global University's first-ever conference on transforming the university in Covid-19 times on Thursday, said: "The world is facing an unprecedented disruption due to Covid-19, especially in the field of education and learning. But we are committed to ensuring access to education to 33 crore Indian students during this challenging time. Through the onenation one-digital platform, we will guarantee every student remains connected to learning, assuring connectivity and access to every scholar."

The minister said teachers and professors are



Ramesh Pokhriyal

indeed "corona warriors"

and appreciated the fact that Indian universities turned the Covid-19 challenge into opportunities. Digital learning, online education and the development of several digital platforms, he said, had enabled the higher education institutions to address this crisis. The minister added that the National Education Policy will prove to be a landmark plan for Indians to compete with the best in the world.

University in association with six global education networks. Welcoming guests, JGU's founding Welcoming vice-chancellor C. Raj Kumar said: "Today's conference organised by O.P. Jindal Global University underscores the extraordi nary potential for the global community of scholars and educationists coming together to reimagine and transform the future of universities. Universities and higher education institutions have a unique role to play not only in terms of helping us overcome this crisis through the work of scientists and researchers around the world, but also to build the economy, polity and society, while building resilience among young people."

SHORT TAKES

ED raids locations of Hilal in bank fraud

New Delhi: The enforcement directorate (ED) on Thursday conducted searches at multiple locations in connection with a moneylaundering case linked to an alleged bank fraud probe against Hilal Rather, son of former Jammu and Kashmir minister Abdul Rahim Rather. Sources said that raids were conducted at several locations in Kashmir, Jammu, Delhi and Ludhiana According to sources the central probe agency has filed a money laundering case against Hilal Rather and others, under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) after taking cognisance of a CBI's FIR and and Income

Villages in 17 UP

Tax Department probe

against him that pertains to

fraud. The exercise has been

a ₹177-crore alleged bank

undertaken to collect evi-

dence, they said.

districts hit by floods

Lucknow: As many as 666 villages have been affected by floods across 17 districts of Uttar Pradesh, and major rivers are flowing above the danger mark at some places in the state, officials said on Thursday. The Sharda river in Lakhimpur Kheri's Palia Kalan, the Saryu river in Barabanki's Elgin Bridge, Ayodhya and Ballia's Turtipar, and the Rapti at Gorakhpur's Bird Ghat were flowing above the red mark, relief commissioner Sanjay Goyal said. Seventeen districts in the state are now flood-affected. A total of 666 villages have been hit, out of which 446 have been marooned, Mr Goyal said. The districts affected by the floods are Ambedkar Nagar, Ayodhya, Azamgarh, Bahraich, Ballia, Balrampur, Barabanki, Basti, Gonda, Gorakhpur, Kushinagar, Lakhimpur Kheri, Mau, Sant Kabir Nagar, Siddharthnagar, Maharajganj and Sitapur. — *PTI*

22-year-old woman

raped in Aurangabad

Aurangabad: A 22-vear-old woman was allegedly raped by two unidentified men near a temple on the outskirts of Maharashtra's Aurangabad city, police said on Thursday, The incident took place when the victim had gone to the Bhangsi Mata Gad area, located 18 km from the city, with a male friend on Tuesday evening, an official from Daulatabad police station said. The duo was accosted by two unidentified men, who allegedly beat them up and forcibly took the victim to an isolated spot and raped her, he said. Based on a complaint lodged by the victim, an offence under Section 376 (rape) and other provisions of the IPC has been registered against the unidentified accused, the offi-

TMC likely to skip

Parliament session

Kolkata: The Trinamul Congress is likely to give the Monsoon Session of Parliament a miss if it commences from August, a senior party leader said. The party, however, would take a call on attending the Session if it is held in September, he said. **Both Houses of Parliament** were adjourned sine die on March 23, nearly two weeks before schedule, as the budget session was curtailed due to the coronavirus pandemic. "Last week, the Lok Sabha Speaker had called me regarding the possibility of beginning the session in August. The party has told the Speaker that it will not be able to attend the Session if it starts this month," TMC leader Sudip Bandopadhyay told PTI. We also won't be able to attend the meetings of the Parliamentary committee this

King cobra rescued from Odisha temple

month," he added. - PTI

Bhubaneswar: An eight-foot long python was rescued in front of Malkangiri Covid hospital in Odisha on Wednesday night. Locals spotted the snake, an Indian rock python, crawling on the main road near the hospital after rainfall in the area. On being informed by them, a member of the Snake Helpline reached the spot and rescued the reptile. Later, it was later handed over to the forest department and eventually

released into the nearby

forest. - PTI

■ Cops suspect suicide, actor's body found 2 days after death

TV actor Samir Sharma found dead

AGE CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, AUG. 6

Television actor Sameer Sharma allegedly committed suicide at his home in suburban Malad. The 44year-old was found hanging from a ceiling fan in the kitchen of his flat at Neha building in Chincholi Bunder locality in Malad (West) on Wednesday night. Sharma has worked in popular serials like Yeh Rishta Hai Pyar Ke, Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi, Kahani Ghar-Ghar Ki. "We have not found any

suicide note at the spot. It seems to be a suicide case. It is suspected that he hanged himself two days back. We have sent the body for an autopsy," said a

No foul play

in Disha's

death: Dad

Mumbai, Aug. 6: The father of Disha Salian,

former manager of late

actor Sushant Singh

Rajput, has said he does

not suspect any foul play in her death and he is

"completely satisfied"

with the probe being

conducted by Mumbai

Police in the case, an

In a letter sent to assis-

tant commissioner of

police (ACP), Malvani, on Wednesday, Satish Salian alleged that

harassing his family by repeatedly questioning their faith in Mumbai

Police and their way of

inquiry into her death,

According to police, Disha Salian, 28, alleged-

ly committed suicide by

jumping from a high-

rise building in Malad

Mr Rajput, 34, was found hanging at his

apartment in suburban

Bandra on June 14. An

accidental death report

was registered in connec-

tion with Disha Salian's death at Malvani police

NAYEAR AZAD

Jailed RJD chief Lalu

Yadav has been shifted

from the paying ward of

the Rajendra Institute Medical Sciences (RIMS)

in Ranchi to the official

residence of the hospital

director located on the

Sources aware of the development told this newspaper that the deci-

sion to move Lalu was

taken after three of his

caretakers tested positive

for Covid-19 on July 25.

This prompted his doc-

tors to suggest the hospi-

tal authorities to shift 72-

year-old RJD supremo to

Lalu Yadav is being

treated for multiple seri-

ous ailments at RIMS

Ranchi. Doctors said that

he is suffering from heart, renal and other

serious diseases and needed to be kept away

The BJP, however, feels

that Lalu Yadav is getting

'special treatment" from

JMM-Congress-RJD led

Mahagathbandhan gov-

ernment in Jharkhand.

Talking to uns no on the issue, BJP

spokesperson Nikhil Anand said, "If Lalu Yadav is being given any

from Covid-19 patients.

an isolated area.

PATNA, AUG. 6

premises.

Lalu shifted to

doc's house as

Covid cases rise

area here on June 8.

media persons

the official said.

official said.



THE INCIDENT came to light when the building's watchman peeped through the kitchen window and saw Mr Sharma hanging. He then alerted members of the society who informed the police.

senior inspector of Malad police station.

The incident came to light when the building's watchman peeped through the kitchen window and saw Mr Sharma hanging. He then alerted members of the society who informed the police. Police rushed to the spot and took Sharma to a hospital where declared brought dead.

The actor was living alone in the rented flat since February, the official

said adding, that the police were trying to get in touch with his family members. His parents are based out of Bangalore and his wife lived separately.

Based on primary information, an Accidental Death Report (ADR) has been registered and further investigation is underway. Police are probing whether the actor had any financial difficulties.

Sameer was currently seen in Yeh Rishtey Hain Pyaar Ke as character

Kuhu's (Kaveri Priyam) father. On July 27, Sharma posted his last words on Înstagram with a poem on death and dreams. "I built my pyre and slept on it and with my fire it was lit. And all that was me I burned in it. I killed my dream to wake up from it. Now my dream is gone," he wrote

on his page. Mr Sharma's comes at a time the entertainment industry is reeling from the shock of the death of Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput, who was found hanging at his apartment in suburban Bandra on June 14. Rajput's death, which will now be investigated by the CBI, exposed many fault-

CBI to probe Sushant Singh death; Rhea, others booked

Agency sleuths to coordinate with Bihar police

AGE CORRESPONDENT

The CBI on Thursday registered an FIR against Bollywood actress Rhea Indrajit Chakraborty, Chakraborty, Sandhya Chakraborty, Showik Chakraborty Samuel Miranda, Shruti Modi, and others in connection with the death case of Sushant Singh Rajput.

A senior official in the agency said the CBI has booked 6 accused and others under sections including criminal conspiracy, abetment of suicide, wrongful restrain, wrongful confinement, theft, criminal breach of trust, cheating and criminal intimidation. The agency sleuths are also in touch with Bihar Police, which was earlier investigating the case, said the official. The case will be probed by

the Special Investigation Superintendent of Police Nupur Prasad and will be supervised by DIG Gagandeep Gambhir and Director

Lalu Yadav

kind of special favour

beyond the existing law overlooking the jail man-

ual then the matter is

very serious. We would

like to warn the Jharkhand government

against giving any privi-leges to any person serv-

Lalu Yadav was earlier

criticized for using mobile phones and holding political meetings inside the RIMS premis-

es. After he was shifted to

the RIMS director's offi-

cial bungalow, BJP lead-

ers in Ranchi alleged that

"the premises would be used as RJD headquar-

ters where meetings will

be held to discuss the

upcoming assembly elec-

After being convicted in the second fodder scam

case involving the illegal

withdrawal of ₹89.27

Lakh from Deoghar treas-

ury, Lalu Yadav was sent

to Birsa Munda jail in

tions in Bihar"

ing jail sentence".



Sushant Singh

Shashidhar, both are senior IPS officers.

Rajput, aged 34, was found hanging from the ceiling of his apartment in suburban Bandra in Mumbai on June 14 and since then Mumbai police has been probing the case. Bihar Police also swung into action following a complaint by Krishna Kishore Singh, the 77-year-old father of Rajput, and a resident of Patna. Patna Police had registered an FIR under IPC sections related to alleged criminal conspiracy, cheating and abetment to suicide among others on the complaint. Another central probe

agency, the ED is also probing allegations of alleged mishandling of Rajput's money (around ₹15 crore) and his bank accounts.

Mallya reply

case hearing

The Supreme Court on

Thursday deferred to

August 20, 2020, the hear-

ing on fugitive industrial-

ist Vijay Mallya petition

seeking the review of the top court's 2017 order

holding him guilty of con-

tempt as court on

Thursday did not find in

its records a reply filed by

beleaguered liquor baron

in the case. Asking lawyer

Jai Munim, appearing for

Mallya, to file again the

reply filed earlier along

with the filing memo, the

SC bench said where was

After efforts to trace the

reply filed by Mally did

not succeed, advocate Munim urged the court to put-off the hearing till

Friday and he would fur-

Adjourning the matter

to August 20, Justice Lalit said, "We will also like to

know when did you put

the reply on the record'

and asked the lawyer to

place on record the filing

memo. Earlier, the top

court had sought an expla-

nation from its own reg-

istry as to why a review

petition filed by fugitive

liquor baron Mallya seek-

ing review of top SC's 2017

order holding him guilty

of contempt was not listed for the last three years.

nish the reply again.

the reply.

not found,

SC defers

PARMOD KUMAR

NEW DELHI, AUG. 6

Supervising cop still in quarantine

Mumbai, Aug. 6: Bihar IPS officer Vinay Tiwari who came here to supervise a probe against actor Rhea Chakraborty will have to the civic authorities allow him to leave early, an offi-cial said on Thursday. Four other Bihar police

officials have already left the city.

Mr Tiwari, city Superintendent of police, Central Patna, landed here on Sunday to oversee the investigation the team of Bihar Police was conducting into a complaint filed by the farther of actor Sushant Singh Rajput regarding his suicide. However, officials of the BMC put him up at SRPF Guest House in suburban Goregaon, asking him to be in "home quarantine" till Aug. 15 as per the corona-related protocol. -PTI

8 patients dead in Guj **Covid hospital blaze**

5 men, 3 women among those killed in Ahmedabad

Ahmedabad, Aug. 6: Eight coronavirus patients died in a huge fire that broke out in the intensive care ward of a private hospital in Gujarat's Ahmedabad early on Thursday morn-ing. As the blaze broke out at Shrey Hospital in A h m e d a b a d 's Navrangpura area at around 3 am, eight fire engines and 10 ambulances of the fire department were rushed to the site. Five men and three women admitted to the ICU ward — died.

"A staffer whose PPE caught fire ran out of the ward to douse it but the fire spread rapidly to the whole ward," Rajesh Bhatt, additional chief fire officer of the Ahmedabad Fire and Emergency Services, was quoted as saying by news agency. Five men and three women, who were undergoing treatment for the novel coronavirus were not in a position to escape," he

About 45 patients were admitted to the 50-bed hospital at the time of accident; rest of them have been rescued and shifted to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Medical



Bodies are shifted for post-mortem in an ambulance after a major fire broke out at Shrey Hospital in Ahmedabad, on Thursday.

Sciences and Research, a civic hospital in the city, an official said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi condoled the deaths in his home "Saddened by the tragic hospital fire in Ahmedabad. Condolences to the bereaved families. May the injured recover soon. Spoke to CM @vijayrupanibjp Ji and Mayor @ibijalpatel Ji regarding the situation. Administration is providing all possible assistance to the affected (sic)," he tweeted this morning.

Visuals from the showed the fire officials carrying out rescue operations as family members of the patients outside the hospital — disturbed as the news of fire broke — tried to get more information about them.

A probe into the incident has been ordered by Gujarat chief minister Vijay Rupani and the hospi-tal has been sealed, news agency ANI reported. Sangeeta Singh, additional chief secretary (home department), will be leading the probe. The chief minister has ordered for a report within three days, read a statement by Mr Rupani's office. — Agencies

BSP-Cong merger: Case goes back to single-judge bench

Jaipur, Aug. 6: The division bench of Rajasthan high court on Thursday disposed of appeals filed by a BJP MLA and the Bahujan Samaj Party against the order of a judge, who had refused to stay the functioning of six BSP MLAs as Congress legislators.

BJP MLA Madan Dilawar and BSP national secretary Satish Mishra had approached the division bench on Tuesday appealing against the single-judge bench order. Both the parties had ear-

lier filed writ petitions challenging the decision of Speaker C.P. Joshi in September 2019 allowing merger of the six BSF MLAs with the Congress. The single-judge bench of Justice Mahendra Kumar Goyal had issued notices to the Speaker and secretary of the Assembly, and the six MLAs on July 30 and directed them to submit

However, the judge had not granted any interim relief and refused to put a stay on the six BSP MLAs participation in the proceedings of the House as Congress legislators. Six BSP MLAs defected to the Congress in September last month.

replies on August 11.

131, including mantri & kin, test Covid +ve in Himachal

Shimla, Himachal Pradesh cabinet minister Sukh Ram Chaudhary and his two daughters were among the 131 people who tested positive for Covid-19 in the state on Thursday, taking the tally of coronavirus cases to 3,048.

This is the highest spike of cases reported on a single day in the state so far, according to government data. In a Facebook post,

Chaudhary, the multipurpose projects (MPP) and power minister, stated that his personal assistant Sonu Chaudhary has tested Covid-19 positive. So, he got himself tested and the report is positive, he

The legislator from Sirmaur's Paonta Sahib requested those who came in contact with him recently to get themselves quarantined and tested for the virus.

Chaudhary, power minister, and his two daughters have tested positive Minister is being shift-ed to Deen Dayal Upadhyay hospital in Shimla and his daughters to Covid care centre in Shimla's Mashobra," additional chief secre-(health) R.D. an said. — PTI Dhiman said.

Devotees visit Hanuman Garhi temple, a day after PM Modi laid foundation for the

construction of Ram temple, in Ayodhya, on Thursday.

■ Shivraj slams Capt. for trying to prevent GI tag for MP rice Basmati tag triggers MP,-Punjab tussle

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY

BHOPAL, AUG. 6 Madhya Pradesh chief min-

ister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Thursday slammed his Punjab coun-terpart Capt. Amrinder Singh for mounting pressure on the Centre to deny geographical indication (GI) tagging of basmati of MP, describing it unfair.

Mr Chouhan said there was no basis for opposition to GI tagging of basmati of MP by Punjab chief minister since the state has 'written recorded history since 1908' of production of the

RO No. SAMVAD-Advt. No:- 13/2021/10000000000/82126

variant of the aromatic rice in 13 districts. "Govt of Madhya Pradesh strongly condemns the letter written by the Punjab chief minister to PMO (Prime Minister's Office) India regarding allotment of GI tagging of basmati rice of 13 districts of the state", a tweet by chief minister's office (CMO) here read.

Mr Chouhan's office here ran a series of tweets justifying the state's demand for ĞI tagging of basmati rice grown in 13 districts of MP in the wake of Mr Singh shooting a letter to the PMO on Wednesday demanding not to allow MP's basmati to not only be detrimental to the interest of Punjab and other states who have already been awarded GI tag for their variant of the aromatic rice, but may also have an adverse impact on the export of basmati by

The Punjab chief minister said India exports bas-mati to the tune of Rs 33,000 crore every year and any dilution in registration of Indian basmati may give advantage to Pakistan (which also pro-duces basmati) in the

get GI tag. In his letter, Mr international market in Singh argued that GI tagging to MP's basmati would in department of the substitution of the

The MP government however dismissed the concern expressed by Mr Singh, saying that GI tagging to the state's basmati would "provide stability to basmati prices in the international markets and boost our

"Madhya Pradesh has recorded history since 1908 of basmati production in 13 districts. Records of supplying seeds to farmers in MP in 1944 is recorded in the records of the Scindia state", a tweet by CMO here said.

Students climb hills for better Internet

AGE CORRESPONDENT BHUBANESWAR, AUG. 6

The ongoing Covid-19 crisis and the changing pattern of education has brought to the fore, very prominently, the large digital divide between the rural and urban Odisha. Students in interior parts of the state are struggling to avail standard internet connectivity to study online.

Reports from the southern Odisha, considered to be an underprivileged



School students studying on a hilltop in Odisha's Rayagada district.

region, said that though the Covid-19 lockdowns pelled schools and other educational institutions

in the zone to restart their curriculum via online, lack of infrastructure in remote areas has virtually thrown the teachinglearning process into the wind. Students in several

parts of Rayagada and Koraput districts have reportedly no other option than to climb mountain or higher grounds or even trees to bridge the gap between digital divide and online

SR. No.	NAME OF BOARD/CORP./AUTH	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE (TIME)	AMOUNT / EMD (APPROX.) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD CORP./AUTH	NODAL OFFICER/CONTA DETAILS/EMAIL
1	HARYANA POLICE HOUSING CORPORATION, PANCHKULA	PROVIDING LAN WORK IN LABORATORY IN I.T. BLOCK P.G. COLLEGE SECTOR 1, PANCHKULA	07.08.2020 14.08.2020	14.45 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in & www.hphc.org.in	dbpanchkula@yahoo.com
2	UHBVN, KURUKSHETRA	E-TENDER FOR EXECUTION OF ELECTRICAL WORKS THROUGH LABOUR CONTRACTOR UNDER (OP) CIRCLE, UHBVN, KURUKSHETRA	19.08.2020 20.08.2020	0.35 lacs (EMD) per Division	https://etenders.hry.nic.in & www.uhbvn.org.in	01744-228956 seopkurukshetra@uhbvn.or
3	UHBVN, ROHTAK	HIRING OF 01 NO. VEHICLE MAHINDRA BOLERO/JEEP 3000 KM FIXED PRICE RS. 3,98,000 PER ANNUM FOR OFFICER OF XEN/C- STORE, UHBVN, ROHTAK.	CLOSING DATE 20.08.2020	6000/-	www.uhbvn.org.in	01262-276064 xenstoresuhbvnrohtak@ gmail.com
4	MUNICIPAL COMMITTEE ASSANDH	COMPLETE SANITATION INCLUDING DOOR TO DOOR COLLECTION OF SOLID WASTE, SANITATION, SWEEPING, PROVIDING REGULAR ROAD SWEEPING, GARBAGE LIFTING, TRANSPORTATION OF ALL KINDS OF GARBAGE, OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF MCC AND MRFC FROM WARD NO. 1 TO 15, MUNICIPAL COMMITTEE, ASSANDH	06.08.2020 17.08.2020	93.96 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	9416666088
5	MUNICIPAL COUNCIL NARNAUL	SELECTION OF CONTRACTOR FOR REMEDIATION AND RECLAMATION OF EXISTING DUMPSITE AT RAGHUNATHPURA NARNAUL RETENDER	04.08.2020 18.08.2020		https://etenders.hry.nic.in/nicgep/app	9999740089 eomcnarnaul@gmail.com

SHORT TAKES

Man finds diamonds

worth ₹35L in Panna

Panna: A labourer became a millionaire overnight when he unearthed three diamonds worth ₹30 lakh to ₹35 lakh at a diamond mine in Panna district of Madhya Pradesh, a senior official said on Thursday. While digging a shallow mine, the labourer, identified only as Subal, found three diamonds with net weight of 7.5 carat, Panna district's diamond officer R.K. Pandey said. Experts have valued the precious stones at anywhere between ₹30 lakh to ₹35 lakh. The labourer has deposited the stones at the district diamond office and they will be auctioned as per government rules. After deducting 12 per cent tax, Subal will get the remaining 88 per cent of the sale proceeds, the official said. A few days ago, another labourer had managed to find a 10.69 carat diamond from one of the mines in Panna. -PT

CPM neta Shyamal

dies of Covid-19

Kolkata: Senior CPI(M) leader Shyamal Chakraborty died of Covid-19 at a hospital in Kolkata on Thursday, party sources said. He was 76. Chakraborty, the threetime transport minister of West Bengal from 1982 to 1996, was admitted to the hospital after he tested posi-tive for Covid-19 on July 30. He was also a two-time Rajya Sabha member and a veteran trade unionist. "He died this afternoon. He was on ventilation for the last few days," a party leader said. He is survived by daughter Ushasi Chakraborty, an actor. Chakraborty is the second notable politician from the state to die of Covid-19. Trinamul Congress MLA Tamonash Ghosh succumbed to the contagion in June. On Wednesday, Bidhannagar Municipal Corporation councillor Subhash Bose also died of Covid-19. — PTI

Honour killing feared as couple burnt alive

Banda, UP: A 19-vear-old woman and her lover were allegedly burnt to death by her family members in a village in Uttar Pradesh's Banda district in a suspected case of honour killing, police said on Thursday. The incident took place on Wednesday evening in Karcha village in Mataundh area when the family members allegedly caught the couple in a compromising position, they said. "They allegedly locked them in a hut and set if on fire," additional SP Mahendra Pratap Singh said Both of them were rushed to a local hospital in serious condition where Bhola (23) died while the woman, Priyanka, who suffered 80 per cent burns and was referred to another facility in Kanpur, succumbed on the way. -PTI

SC seeks report on

Palghar lynching

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Thursday asked the Maharashtra government to place before it the details of the inquiry conducted against the police personnel and the action taken against them for not intervening when two Sadhus were attacked and lynched by a mob at Palghar. A bench headed by Justice Ashok mBhushan also directed the Maharashtra government to also place before the two charge-sheets filed by the State police in the case. The court gave Maharashtra gov-ernment three weeks time to bring on record the inquiry report and action taken against police personnel and the two charge-sheets. The court direction to Mahagrashtra government came while hearing petitions seeking the probe by the CBI and the NIA.

Court refuses to grant bail to Indrani

Mumbai: A special CBI court rejected bail application filed by Indrani Mukerjea in 2012 Sheena Bora murder case. This is Indrani's fifth bail plea that has been rejected by the court. While arguing for bail, she told the court that the prosecution's case was "false and baseless" and she had nearly 120 documents to prove it. She pointed out inconsistencies in the evidence put forth by the prosecution to prove her role as a conspirator and one of the killers of her daughter Sheena Bora.

Agencies seek satellites to keep eye on China

In an emphasis on the

Buddhist circuit connec-

tivity amid increasing

Chinese assertiveness in

the region, PM Modi also

informed the Lankan PM

about "the establishment

of an international air-

port in the Buddhist pil-

4-6 dedicated satellites can help them keep a check on PLA's moves

Seeking to keep a closer eye on the activities of the Chinese military both near the Indian territory as well as in its depth areas all along the 4,000 kilometre Line of Actual Control (LAC), the Indian security agencies feel there is a requirement of four to six dedicated satellites which can help them keep a check on the adver-

sary's moves.

The need has been felt after the Chinese Army in the garb of an exercise in the Xinjiang region on its side of the LAC mobilised more than 40,000 troops along with heavy weaponry and artillery and start-ed rushing them towards Indian territory and transgressed into Indian territory at multiple locations surprising the Indian formations located in Leh, including the 14 Corps headquarters.

"To improve the coverage of the activities of the Chinese troops and forces in both near Indian territory and in their depth areas, there is a need for four to six dedicated satellites with very high-resolution sensors and cameras giving ability to keep a close watch even on the small movement of small objects and individuals," defence sources told ANI.

PM congratulates Rajapaksa after landslide win

KUMARASWAMI NEW DELHI, AUG. 6

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday con-gratulated his Sri Lankan counterpart Mahinda Rajapaksa on his party's performance in the parliamentary elections, with early trends show-ing that Rajapaksa fami-ly-run Sri Lanka People's Party (SLPP) was headed

for a landslide win. He also commended the government and the electoral institutions of Sri Lanka for effectively organising the elections despite the constraints of the Covid-19 pandemic, a statement by the Prime

The capability and assets would also help the

country to reduce depend-

ence on foreign associates

to keep a watch on Chinese and other adver-

Indian

Forces already have a few

military satellites which are used for keeping a

close watch on the adver-

saries but there is a need

to further strengthen that

capability, the sources

Armed

saries, they said.

Minister's Office said. He appreciated Lankan people for their enthusiastic participation in the elections, and said this reflected the strong democratic values shared by both countries. on the "successful conduct of

in Sri Lanka yesterday". In a tweet, Mr Modi said: "It was a pleasure to speak to you. Once again, many congratulations. We will work together to further advance all areas of bilateral cooperation and to take our special ties to ever newer heights."

Mr Rajapaksa also thanked Mr Modi on Twitter for the congratulatory phone call.

At the moment, Chinese

troops have transgressed

into Indian territory in

Finger area along the Panging Tso lake where

they are refusing to disen-

gage completely and want

to create an observation

post at Finger-5. In Gogra

area also, they are main-

Because of the lack of

clarity about the Chinese

activities, the Indian side

taining some elements.

parliamentary elections grim city of Kushinagar' in India's Uttar Pradesh, adding that "the city looked forward to welcoming visitors from Sri Lanka at an early date". New Delhi also said, "Recalling their cordial and fruitful previous interactions, the two lead-ers reiterated their shared commitment to strength-

> took time to build up its numbers in Ladakh and additional forces had to be pumped in from adjoining areas and reserve formations were also moved there. The Chinese have created a similar build up all along the LAC opposite Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh but

> the Chinese troops there

are in depth areas.

en the age-old and multi-

dimensional India-Sri Lanka relationship."

Rahul asks why is PM lying on intrusion in Ladakh area

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, AUG. 6

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Thursday hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi and accused him of lying on India's border standoff issue with China after the ministry of defence offi-cially acknowledged that Chinese soldiers intruded into Indian territory in eastern Ladakh in May.

Addressing party workers across Bihar ahead of the Assembly polls at a virtual rally, Mr Gandhi charged the Modi government with destroying all institutions in collusion with the BJP's ideological parent — the RSS — and asserted that the Congress must shoulder the responsibility of bringing all the Opposition parties togeth-

er. My blood boiled when I learnt that China had captured a part of our territory, Mr Gandhi said, alleging the PM spoke a lie that no such thing has happened. He got exposed by a contrary statement from the defence ministry itself.

Did he not care at all for the sacrifices made by the

PM likely to inaugurate Rohtang tunnel by Sept-end: Himachal CM

Dharamshala, Aug. 6: Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to inau-Rohtang tunnel, being built on the Leh-Manali highway, in the last week of September, Himachal Pradesh chief minister Jai Ram Thakur said.

He said the tunnel will give all-weather connectivity to the remote and border areas of the state.

The strategically important project is being completed at a cost of around ₹3,200 crore, he said.

Bihar Regiment? Twenty of our soldiers belonging to the regiment were killed in the clashes with Chinese troops. The PM's averment was tantamount to an insult to the martyrs, Mr Gandhi alleged Turning his attention towards the Covid-19 pandemic, he remarked sar-castically, I had warned

way back in February that the country was going to be hit by a corona tsunami. And we are on our way

"The tunnel, which was a dream of Atal Behari Vajpayee is expected to be inaugurated in the last week of September by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It will give all weather connectivity to the remote and border areas," the CM said.

The tunnel is one of the longest road tunnels in the country and is being built at an elevation of 10,171 feet under Rohtang Pass in the eastern Pir Panjal in the eastern range of the Himalayas.

— PTI

to becoming the vishwa guru of the coronavirus.

Today, I am predicting a much bigger storm of unemployment and a sinking economy which may batter Bihar and the rest of the country in about six months or a year. The blame lies on the Modi government and the RSS which are together working towards destroying all institutions, Mr having told the rally.

Putin expected to visit India in Oct. for bilateral meet

KUMARASWAMI NEW DELHI, AUG. 6

Russian President Vladimir expected to visit India in October this year

Vladimir

annual bilateral summit between the two countries, New Delhi said on Thursday. India said "regional and international issues of interest" are being discussed in exchanges

between the two countries, a veiled indication perhaps to the current Sino-India military military stand-off. India nas time-tested strategic ties with Russia spanning decades especially in the sector but defence Russia also has close ties with China.

It may be recalled that about a month ago, Prime Narendra Modi had spo-ken to Russian Minister President Putin and had "conveyed his keenness to welcome President Putin in India" for the (institutionalised annuformal) Bilateral Summit this year.

spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said that in the recent exchanges between the two sides, regional and international issues have also been discussed.

He said Mr Modi and Mr Putin had spoken on July 2 when the PM had congratulated him on the successful national vote on constitutional amendments in Russia.

"Then in the last week of June, Raksha Mantri (Rajnath Singh) had visited Moscow. The Indian military contingent had

India blasts Pak's close ally Turkey

New Delhi: India on

Thursday lambasted

Turkey and asked it to refrain from interfering in India's internal affairs on the Kashmir issue. Soon after Turkey reportedly said the revoking of Article 370 a year ago was not conducive to peace and security in the region, MEA said, terming Turkey's views as "factually incorrect and biased" Wednesday had seen the first anniversary of India's revoking of Article 370, a Constitutional provision that had granted special status to the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir.

participated in the 75the anniversary of the victory in the 2nd world "Yesterday when foreign secretary (Harsh Vardhan Shringla) and the (Russian) deputy foreign minister spoke they took stock of all these recent exchanges and the idea is to keep the momentum of these regular exchanges going on because due to the Covid situation, we have not been able to have

"But there is a full calendar of forthcoming high-level between the two sides. The SCO and Brics foreign ministers meetings, the NSAs' meeting, the Defence ministers meeting are scheduled. Of course, we have the annual bilateral summit coming up in October when President Putin is expected to visit India,'

visits." he said.

Several roads submerged

It was a storm-like situa-tion in Mumbai on Wednesday, claimed Iqbal Singh Chahal, the chief of Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation "South Mumbai area received a heavy rainfall of 300 mm in just four

nessed a record rainfall. Due to this, there was waterlogging areas," said Mr Chahal.

underground pipelines. the city on Wednesday. For the first time in

secretariat Maharashtra

Heavy rains, strong winds batter Mumbai

AGE CORRESPONDENT MUMBAL AUG. 6

With rainfall of 300 mm in just four hours, any city in the world would have witnessed flooding.

hours with the wind speed of 100 kmph. Even during the deluge on July 26, 2005, South Mumbai had not come across such a situation. Major areas like Nariman Point, Colaba in South Mumbai wit-

A retaining wall on BG Kher Marg in South Mumbai caved in on Wednesday night due to heavy rainfall, also causing heavy damage to four

Meanwhile, Mumbai is slowly limping back to normalcy following the havoc caused due to incessant rains and gusty winds that lashed

recent memory, South Mumbai witnessed heavy waterlogging in areas like Nariman Point, Marine Drive, Girgaon Chowpatty etc. The road outside Mantralaya, the of the ment at Nariman Point, was submerged in rainwater. The state govern-ment-owned JJ Hospital also witnessed heavy waterlogging on the ground floor, which hous-es casualty ward and

other departments. Due to strong winds, the signage atop the BSE building was damaged



People look at uprooted trees fallen on a road near Wankhede Stadium, Mumbai, on Thursday. The Colaba observatory in south Mumbai recorded 330mm rainfall in the 24-hour. RAJESH JADHAV

Flood threat looms large in several parts of Karnataka

Bengaluru, Aug. Battered by torrential rains, several parts of Karnataka are facing a flood-like situation for the third consecutive year, putting lives and property

Several districts of the state's coastal, Malnad and north interior regions are receiving heavy rains and the showers are expected to continue, while there are reports of landslides in hilly areas of Kodagu and Chikkamagaluru districts.

With flood-like situation in several parts of the state, chief minister B.S. Yediyurappa, who is currently undergoing treatment for Covid-19 infection at a private hospital here, has ordered immediate release of ₹50 crore for

6: emergency relief. in several parts of the state, I have instructed the

chief secretary to review the situation and issued instructions to DCs (deputy commissioners) to closely monitor the situation and take necessary measures. Also ordered immediate release of ₹50 crores for emergency relief purposes," he tweeted last night.

A statement released by the CMO on Thursday said, Yediyurappa has directed the district incharge ministers to take precautionary measures in the wake of heavy rain-

fall across the state. He instructed the ministers to remain in their constituencies and tour the damaged areas and

also directed them to tion and other necessary measures. "₹50 crore has already been released and if necessary more funds would be released. The ministers can take decisions regarding emergency works," he added. Revenue minister R. Ashoka said he had spo-

ken to deputy commissioners of all the districts and given them necessary instructions to respond immediately to the situation. He has called for a meeting of the disaster management authority later today.

Parts of districts in coastal and Malnad regions are currently coastal regions under red alert and rains are likely to continue

meteorological department (IMD) said a red alert has been issued to Malappuram district for August 7 and an orange alert in nine districts of Ernakulam, Idukki, Palakkad, Thrissur, Malappuram, Kozhikode, Wayanad, Kannur and Kasaragod till August 9.

Heavy showers

people moved

to relief camps

Thiruvananthapuram, Aug. 6: Heavy rains lashed north Kerala on

Thursday and a red alert was issued for Idukki

and Wayanad districts

with Nilambur town get-

ting briefly flooded after

the Chaliyar river over-

In its bulletin, the India

flowed.

lash Kerala,

The Malappuram district administration has opened nine camps in the district while seven are in Nilambur alone.

"We have opened nine camps in Malappuram with seven of them in Nilambur itself. A total of 410 people are in the seven camps with adherence to Covid-19 proto-col," a district disaster management authority

Nilambur town was flooded for afew hours earlier in the day but the water subsided, police said, adding that those from the low-lying areas were shifted to the camps. At least 425 people are in various camps in Malappuram. Meanwhile, Wayanad

district administration opened 12 camps and shifted at least 560 people. Extensive damages have been reported from Kozhikode, Kannur and Kasargod districts following heavy rain and strong winds.

Tributes pour in for Sushma on death aniv

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, AUG 6

Tributes poured in on the first death anniversary of BJP leader and former External Affairs minister Sushma Swaraj on Thursday. Prime Minister Narendra Modi remembered her as "an articulate voice for India at the world stage" while vice-president M. Venkaiah Naidu said she was a "blend of modern thinking and traditional values." Swaraj passed away last year after a cardiac arrest hours after Parliament gave its nod to the bill nullifying the contentious Article 370 about which she tweeted that she was "waiting to see this day in my life-



Remembering Sushmaji on her first Punya Tithi. Her untimely and unfortunate demise left many saddened. She served India selflessly and was an articulate voice for India at the world stage.

- Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

time." It was her last tweet and hours later she was rushed to the AIIMS where she breathed her last. 'Remembering Sushmaji

on her first Punya Tithi. Her untimely and unfortunate demise left many saddened. She served India selflessly and was an articulate voice for India at the world stage," the Prime Minister tweeted. Recalling how Swarai

used to visit him on every Raksha Bandhan to tie Rakhi, the vice-president said she was seen as "an epitome of Indian culture. She was a blend of modern thinking and traditional values. She was always respectful towards seniors and elders. She was one of the most affable Indian politicians and treated everybody with warmth and affection." He addressed the first memorial lecture organised by the Panjab University. External affairs minis-

ter S. Jaishankar said Swaraj was "always an inspiration." Paying trib-utes to her, law minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said will always remember her as a great orator, visionary leaders and above all a compassionate

human being."
Union home minister Amit Shah said she was a "towering figure of Indian polity, an outstanding parliamentarian and a brilliant orator who dedicated her entire life in the service of the nation. Her ideals will continue to inspire the generations to

Former J&K L-G G.C. Murmu appointed new CAG of India New Delhi, Aug. 6: The h i s office," a

government Thursday

appointed Girish Chandra Murmu as the new Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India, a day after he resigned as the lieutenant-governor of Jammu and Kashmir.

Mr Murmu will succeed Rajiv Mehrishi, a 1978-batch IAS officer of the Rajasthan cadre, who completes his term on August 7. "...the President has been pleased to appoint Shri Girish Chandra Murmu to be the Comptroller and Auditor General of India with effect from the date he assumes



G.C. Murmu

economic affairs said. Earlier in the day, President Ram Nath Kovind accepted Mr Murmu's resignation as

notifica-

tion by t h e

depart-

ment of

the first lieutenant-governor of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.
Mr Murmu, a 1985-batch IAS officer, had abruptly submitted his

resignation on Wednes-



THE ASIAN AGE

7 AUGUST 2020

Did PM just discredit India's freedom fight?

rime Minister Narendra Modi has exhorted his fellow citizens to treat August 5 on a par with August 15, India's Independence Day. The call, made after conducting the *bhoomi pujan* of the Ram temple at Ayodhya on Wednesday, August 5, defies logic and negates history. Ram's devotees, Mr Modi included, have every right to be joyous when their lord, venerated as Maryada Purushottam, or the epitome of honour, gets a proper abode; none has a reason to quarrel with them either. But drawing an impossible parallel with Indian Independence movement and the one for the temple has its risks. For one, the freedom movement was a unifier in itself — Indians of all hues, irrespective of their religion, caste, language, sex, race and region were part of it. Countless people willingly sacrificed their lives for the cause, or suffered in silence, or became martyrs or spent their lives in villages changing their faces. It was a movement to not only liberate this nation from the yoke of foreign rule but also an attempt to unshackle itself from the very many forms of bondages that stopped its citizens from living their lives to the full. And

the best product of the movement was the Constitution of India -Equally incomprehensible is was the constitution of many which promised every Indian citithe silence or subservience

zen justice.
The Ram Janmabhoomi moveof the opposition, save of the ment, on the other hand, had always Left, to the politicisation of been a partisan political one, co-opted and nourished by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and an essentially religious ceremony. None seems to have an issue with the Prime its political arm, the Bharatiya Janata Party. Thousands of Indians Minister, accompanied by who had nothing to do with the temthe chief minister of a state, ple or the movement lost their lives laying the foundation stone or suffered huge losses due to it. The of a place of worship of one rathyatra of the then BJP president, L.K. Advani, left a trail of blood and destruction across Indian streets. religion.

The land on which the temple will now come up is freed through acts of violence, a fact underlined by the Supreme Court, which ordered construction of the temple. Mr Modi's call for seeing the temple as a symbol of India's unity would have better acceptance had he mentioned those innocent victims and begged their pardon. Perhaps, it would have been a true tribute to Lord Ram.

Equally incomprehensible is the silence or subservience of the opposition, save of the Left, to the politicisation of an essentially religious ceremony. None seems to have an issue with the Prime Minister, accompanied by the chief minister of a state, laying the foundation stone of a place of worship of one religion. The Congress, as it has always been on the issue, is a confused lot, speaking in many voices. The Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party expressed no opinion, nor the DMK of Tamil Nadu. Kerala's CPI(M) chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan, however, made two points. One, India's secularist ideals would not have suffered this jolt had the Congress chosen to hold on to them. Two, our agenda must be to contain Covid-19 which has already affected 19 lakh people, and then bring succour to the people the pandemic has reduced to penury. That's some semblance of political sanity and sagacity, if you will.

In Beirut, avoidable tragedy

devastating instance of sheer human incompetence led to the ripping apart of a swath of the Lebanese capital Beirut, destroying its port and two giant grain silos, killing at least 135 people, besides injuring 5,000 and leaving three lakh people homeless while affecting the lives of 7.5 lakh citizens and causing an estimated \$3 billion in damage. Had the leaders of the judicial or executive branches of the tiny West Asian nation been able to sort out the storage of 2,750 tons of ammonium nitrate, confiscated from a financially distressed Russian cargo ship, rather than leave it lying in a port hangar for close to seven years, an explosion powerful enough to record 3.3 on the Richter scale and reverberate miles away in Cyprus would not have taken place.

It might have suited the leaders of Lebanon to have been in a position to blame it on saboteurs, terrorists, aggressors or conquerors, of whom the country, once proud of its label of 'Switzerland of the East', has seen aplenty in its history. It appears, prima facie, that an innocent enough spark from a welding torch set off stored fireworks, which in turn ignited the chemical that would have been far more useful as a base for fertiliser for a country that virtually imports all its food needs. A government, already in debt to the tune of 165 per cent of GDP, has so far offered a piffling \$66

million as relief even as it keeps its port officials under home arrest.

The scale of indecisiveness and lack of clarity on what to do with a chemical that has at least half the explosive power of TNT is risible. The human tragedy caused by such apathy, particularly when it comes to handling the complexity of man's ingenuity in making substances that can blow mankind to pieces, is shockingly revealing of the fecklessness of politicians who aspire for power but have little understanding of their responsibilities in safeguarding people. To them, investment in human safety seems the least priority.

THE ASIAN AGE

T. VENKATRAM REDDY

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Pandemic on rise: More questions than answers



Patralekha Chatterjee

Dev 360

the coronavirus seeping into every faultline in this country? The honest answer is: We

don't know. Six months into the pandemic, there are more questions than answers about the virus. No one really knows how many Indians have been infected by the new coronavirus, nor how many have died. Perhaps we will never know because so many are asymptomatic and there are cracks in our death registration systems.

This week, a young copywriter told me that his father had died of Covid-19 but the family had managed to persuade the hospital authorities into changing the cause of death into something else because they wished the body to be cremated traditionally. Meanwhile, India's offi-

cial Covid-19 tally has mark; and the death toll close to 40,000. Currently, India has the largest number of confirmed Covid-19 cases in Asia and the third highest number of confirmed cases in the world, after the United States and Brazil.

There are masses of

data swirling around. According to government data, a cumulative total of 2,14,84,402 samples had been tested till August 4. At 2.10 per cent, India's Covid-19 case fatality rate since the first lockdown is low compared to the global average; 50 per cent of deaths have happened in the age group of 60 and above; 37 per cent deaths belong to the 45-60 age group; 11 per cent deaths belong to the 26-44 years age group; while 68 per cent of people who died were men and 32 per cent were women.

The government says 28 states/Union territories show a Covid positivity rate below 10 per cent, and this indicates that the testing strategy is on the right track. But the numbers we have don't tell the whole

story. Dr Hemant Shewade, a Bengaluru-based community medicine expert tracking the discourse around Covid-19 data in India points out that nationally, only 86 per cent deaths are captured by the civil registration system and only 22 per

cent are medically certified for cause of death.

The Medical Certification of Cause of Death is not enforced in every state with equal efficiency. So far, it has been implemented only in certain hospitals and mostly in urban areas. This can give a very skewed picture even now, when there is a parallel system of Covid-19 death reporting (which are compiled by the district administration and shared with the state government and then with the Centre).

'here bility of the official Covid death figures coming from Covid-designated hospitals where only confirmed Covid cases, those suspected of having Covid and who reach the Covid hospital in an extreme condition are factored in," says Dr Shewade.

Not all states are equally equipped in terms of health and diagnostic infrastructure human resources. Where testing is very low, and where medical certification of cause of death is low, it is likely that there will be a gross under-estimation of Covid-19 deaths. For example, Bihar, which has a population of over 120 million, has the lowest testing rate in the country, a mere four tests per 1,000 persons. This means a large number of cases may be going undetected.

There are other gaps in the data which impede our ability to understand the pandemic's trajectorv. The data on Covid-19 tests in India doesn't make clear the distinc-

of samples being tested and the number of people tested. There is also no official disaggregated data for every state on the RT-PCR tests (gold standard of coronavirus testing) and rapid antigen tests, says Dr Mohak Gupta, now part of the iCART Covid-19 research team and creator of www.covidtoday.in, an open source project tracking India's statewise progress against the Covid-19 epidemic.

Only a few states like Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Delhi share this information publicly but there are no updated national figures. We don't know how many among those who have antigen tests go for a fol-low-up RT-PCR test and what the results are. We also don't have statewise gender-disaggregated data on Covid deaths in any official portal nor the breakup between deaths in rural areas and those in urban areas. Dr Gupta points out that there is scant contact tracing data so we don't have a granular picture of how and where the virus is spreading, and stresses the need for realtime hospitalisation data and influenza-like illness (ILI) surveillance data in the public domain.

Then there is fear, which prevents insiders from coming forward to tell the truth.

"Unfortunately, there is no law in force that encourages potential whistleblowers in the public sector to bring complaints of corruption and wrongdoing to the attention of the competent authorities. Nor is there any mechanism to protect a whistleblower from reprisals for pointing the finger at wrongdoing. An available recourse is to make complaints to the lokayuktas. Hardly any parent law of such bodies empowers them to protect whistle-

Where testing is very low, and where medical certification of cause of death is low, it is likely that there will be a gross under-estimation of Covid-19 deaths

blowers. The only remaining option is to move the courts directly, which few would want to do given the length of time it takes to get a conviction," says Venkatesh Nayak, programme head of the Access to Information Programme of the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative. As for whistleblowing in the private sector, the extremely limited provisions in the 2013 Companies Act or the Limited Liability Partnerships Act don't inspire much confidence in potential whistleblowers, says Mr Nayak.

There is also no mention of whistleblower provisions in the laws governing societies and trusts, which are of colonial vintage. "It comes as no surprise that doctors and nurses working in entities regulated by any of these laws continue to suffer in silence or at the most make complaints through official channels at considerable risk to themselves and their careers. The only remaining option is to go on mass strike, as is now happening in Zimbabwe. However, the government will clamp down on such legitimate protests invoking Maintenance Act or draconian provisions of the Disaster Management

Act," he adds. Succesive governments have pushed the six-year-Whistleblowers Protection Act under the carpet without bringing it into force despite repeated reminders from civil society and the

Telling the truth has never been easy. However, there are those who persist. As Mr Nayak points out, despite the restrictions imposed the Covid-related lockdowns, citizens are using the Right to Information Act to demand details of action by governments to tackle the epidemic. But delays and refusals are common as are attacks on RTI activists.

The writer focuses on development issues in India and emerging economies. She can be reached at patralekha.chatterjee @gmail.com.

LETTERS

ALLAH'S 'AVATAR'

Is the RSS/BJP trying to steal the thunder of the Sunni Waqf Board by having its ascetics, specifically one Paramhans Das, go to town advising the board to build a hospital on the land they have got as compensation in the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid case on the presumption that since it is "donated land", the prayers offered thereon will not be accepted?

> Priyanka Mathur Kolkata

PASSING LIGHT

THE DEATH OF veteran CPI(M) leader and party's central committee member Syamal Chakraborty due to coronavirus on Thursday, August 6, at the age of 78 is shocking. He will be remembered for his struggle for the working class and the left movement in the country. Peace, Syamal Chakraborty.

Sankar Paul Chakdaha, West Bengal

SUSHANT'S FOLLY

DID SUSHANT SINGH RAJPUT commit any indiscretion with his manager Disha Saliyan which preyed on his mind and lead to his breakup with girlfriend Rhea Chakraborty, causing him to take the extreme step of killing himself? His reaction to Ms Saliyan's death and his telephonic silence with oost June 8 point to this conjecture. No one is infallible.

BALOCH CARD

PAKISTAN has initiated a diplomatic offensive against India by releasing a map showing Kashmir, Ladakh, Junagadh and Sir Creek as its territory. Although the move is bizarre and does not merit a response, the Imran Khan government will make the mistake of bringing it to the international fora. That's when India should raise Gilgit-Baltistan and the Balochistan freedom movement. It has the precedent of success in Bangladesh, so the world will sit up and take note. Devendra Khurana

TEMPLE POLITICS

ORDINARY PEOPLE go to work in the morning and return home in the evening. They need not go to the temple, but worship gods and god-desses at home. To them, faith is personal. But now temple politics has arrived to spoil our secular credentials and syncretic culture. Faultlines between communities are being deepened. Good governance is a distant dream.

Uttam Bhowmik Chandramerh, West Bengal



Dilli Ka Babu

Officer sent to PMO won laurels in TN

ny appointment in the allpowerful Prime Minister's Office (PMO) is viewed with great interest. So, when P. Amudha, who is a 1994 batch IAS officer of Tamil Nadu cadre, was appointed to the PMO as joint secretary, on a lateral shift basis, for the remainder of her fiveyear central deputation period, observers are speculating about her talent that can meet the high standards of the PMO. Before this appointment, Amudha was serving as a professor at the Lal Bahadur Shashtri National Academy of Administration in Mussoorie.

Interestingly, minutes after the

news of her appointment emerged

Tamil Nadu chief minister E.

Palaniswami congratulated the

IAS officer in a tweet and said that

she had earned the goodwill of the

state government as well as the

affection of the people through her honesty and efficiency. Amudha has earned her reputation as an effective field officer and ability to take swift decisions. Her peers recall her work during the Chennai floods in 2015 when she was special officer for monsoon relief in the state. It's these qualities that may have impressed the PMO to reel her in for what could be the most rewarding and challenging assignments for an IAS officer.

WHO WILL BE NEW RBI DEPUTY GOVERNOR?

A search committee headed by Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba will interview candidates for the post of deputy governor of the Reserve Bank of India on August 7, according to sources. This was meant to be held on July 23 but was put off without any explanation. The post

had fallen vacant after senior-most governor Vishwanathan demitted office three months before the end of his tenure in March due to health rea-

Besides Gauba, the committee includes RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das, financial services secretary Debasish Panda and two independent members.

The selected name from the interview will be sent to the appointments committee of the Cabinet headed by the Prime Minister for final approval. Sources say that the panel has shortlisted eight candidates for the posts.

The RBI Act mandates that the central bank should have four deputy governors — two from within the ranks, one commercial banker and another an economist to head the monetary policy depart-

ment. At present, the RBI has three deputy governors — B.P. Kanungo, M.K. Jain and Michael Debabrata

HALT OR GO TO J&K CADRE CHANGE?

The Centre stopped inducting new officers in the J&K cadre of the All India Services after the recategorisation of Jammu & Kashmir into two Union territories, J&K and Ladakh, in August last year. The process was recently reinitiated, but sources say, it has been put on hold again after receiving feedback from officers that it would lead to confusion.

The J&K cadre of IAS, IPS and IoFS officers was to be merged into the AGMUT cadre. However, according to the regulations, officers already serving in the J&K cadre at the time would continue in

the existing cadre. The cadre controlling authority for AGMUT is the ministry of home affairs while the other cadres are controlled by the department of personnel and training (DoPT).

Apparently, some officers approached the Centre saying that two officers of the same batch would end up under different controlling authorities which would lead to "confusion" and "create differences" between the officers. Seeing the resistance from the babus, the Centre has decided, for now, not to proceed with the proposed cadre merger. Some officers believe that any key decision on the merger will likely happen only after August 15.

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













IN BRIEF

Court indicts

Shehbaz, son

SHAFQAT ALI

A Pakistani accountability court on Thursday indicted Pakistan Muslim League-(Nawaz) President Shehbaz Sharif and his son Hamza Shahbaz in Ramzan Sugar Mills reference. During the hearing headed by judge Amjad Na-zir Chaudhry, both the accused pleaded not guilty in the reference and their lawyer requested time for case preparation which was rejected by the court. Shehbaz told the judge that he was being dragged into fake case as he has always worked with honesty and served the people of Punjab for 10 years. "I didn't take salary and even mon-ey for petrol for 12 years. I brought investment to Pakistan for economic stability," he added. The PML-N leader said he was a public representative with emotions for

5 dead in Denver

general masses.

home arson fire

Denver: Five people were found dead Wednesday after an early morning fire destroyed a suburban Denver home a blaze that authorities said they suspect was intentionally set. Three people escaped the fire by jumping from the home's second floor. Investigators believe the victims were a toddler, an older child and three adults. Denver Fire Department Capt. Greg Pixley said. Their bodies were discovered after firefighters extinguished the fire, which was first reported by a Denver police officer at 2:40 a.m., Pixley said. The three survivors were hospitalised with non-life-threatening injuries, Denver police spokesman Jay Casillas said. Pixley spoke outside the charred ho-

neighbourhood. A police officer attempting to rescue people on the first floor was pushed back by the fire's heat, and it appears that those who died were all on the first floor.

use in the Green Valley Ranch

Bombs damage ATM in NZ mall

Wellington: Would-be thieves apparently detonated two homemade bombs at a New Zealand mall ATM early Thursday and left other unexploded bombs behind, according to police. Authorities closed the Chartwell Shopping Centre in Hamilton and some nearby streets while they searched the area to make sure it was safe. A military bomb disposal

team was called to the site. Police said they found several homemade explosive devices including two, that appeared to have exploded. They said the bombs had damaged the ATM and the immediate area around it but hadn't injured anybody. The ATM stood at an exterior wall of the shopping centre at an ANZ bank branch. Police initially declined say what the devices were made from or to confirm that no money had been stolen, saying they would release more details later in the day.

NIRAV MODI IN CUSTODY TILL AUGUST 27

London, Aug. 6: Fugitive diamond merchant Nirav Modi, fighting extradition to India, was on Thursday further remanded in custody until August 27 after he appeared via videolink at a regular remand hearing before a UK court on charges over the nearly \$2 billion Punjab National Bank fraud and money laundering case.

The 49-year-old jeweller, who has been lodged at Wandsworth Prison in south-west London since his arrest in March last year, appeared via videolink before District Judge Vanessa Baraitser at Westminster Magistrates' Court in London for a regular 28-day "call-over" hearing. He was told the next hearing in the case will be a case management hearing ahead of a trial set from September 7.

"You will appear via videolink again. Your lawyers may be present in court," said Judge Baraitser, in reference to the part remote setting in operation across UK courts since the Coronavirus lockdown. In May, District Judge Samuel Goozee presided over the first part of Modi's extradition trial, held in a partial remote settings, with the second part scheduled between September 7 and 11. Besides, completing the arguments on establishing a prima facie case against Modi the trial next month will deal with a second extradition request, made by the Indian authorities and certified by UK Home Secretary Priti Patel.

Don's FB post of kids immune to **Covid-19 deleted**

Houston, Aug. 6: Social media giant Facebook, for the first time, has removed a post from US President Donald Trump in which he claimed that children were "almost immune" to Covid-19, saying it violated its policy against spreading "misinformation" about the Coronavirus. The post in question was a video clip of a Trump interview on Fox News Channel uploaded by the Trump

campaign on Wednesday. The US President claims in the clip that children are "almost immune" to Covid-19. While much remains unknown about the Coronavirus, children can contract Covid-19 and are believed to be able to spread it to others, even without symptoms.

This video includes false claims that a group of people is immune from Covid-19 which is a violation of our policies around harmful Covid misinformation," Andy Stone, a Facebook policy spokesperson said in a statement.

A link to the post now diverts to a page that says, "This Content Isn't Available Right Now." It is the first time that Facebook has removed a post from Trump entirely, rather than labelling it, as it has done in the past, making it a rare instance in which it has been willing to censor the president.

In June, Facebook removed ads that the Trump campaign posted that featured a symbol Nazis used to classify political prisoners during World War II. Twitter also removed a link to the same video

Test travellers from 'risk areas': Germany the number is still far

short of the peak of more

than 6,000 reached in

"What we are seeing is a lot of small outbreaks,"

Health Minister Jens Spa-

hn told reporters. "People

are getting infected at

family parties, at their

place of work or at community facilities." On top

of that, school holidays -

the dates of which are

staggered across Germa-

ny's 16 states — are end-

ing in some regions, incr-

easing concerns that vac-

ationers could bring home

the virus. Last Saturday,

the government started

offering free tests for peo-

ple returning to the coun-

try, a move that Spahn

said likely contributed to

the increase in recorded

early April.

Berlin, Aug. 6: Germany will require people arriving from countries deemed high risk, such as the United States, to take Coronavirus tests starting this weekend, the health minister said Thursday, as the country recorded its highest daily tally of new infections in three months. German officials have voiced alarm over a steady upward creep in the number of new infections over recent weeks.

The national disease control centre, the Robert Koch Institute, said 1,045 cases were recorded on time since May 7 that it has counted more than 1,000 new cases in a day. Daily figures can be volatile or distorted by delays in reporting, and

clip, which the official

lier on Wednesday. Links to the tweet now point Twitter users to a message that the tweet violated Twitter's rules and is no longer available. The Trump campaign accused Facebook of "flagrant bias".

Trump Twitter account

@TeamTrump shared ear-

"The President was stating a fact that children are less susceptible to the Coronavirus," Courtney Parella, the campaign's deputy national press secretary, said in an emailed

"Another day, another display of Silicon Valley's flagrant bias against this

President, where the rules are only enforced in one direction. Social media companies are not the arbiters of truth," Parella said. A US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study involving 2,500 children published in April found that about one in five infected children were hospitalised versus one in three adults; three children died.

statement.

Lebanon officials shift blast blame as Macron calls for serious reforms

Beirut, Aug. 6: Lebanese officials targeted in the investigation of the massing the state of the massing the state of th ive blast that tore through Beirut sought to shift blame for the presence of explosives at the city's port, and the visiting French president warned Thursday that without serious reforms the country would "continue to sink"

The blast Tuesday, which appeared to have been caused by an accidental fire that ignited a warehouse full of ammonium nitrate at the city's port, rippled across the Lebanese capital, killing at least 135 people, injuring more than 5,000 and causing widespread destruction.

It also may have accelerated the country's Coronavirus outbreak, as thousands flooded into hospitals in the wake of the bla st. Tens of thousands have been forced to move in with relatives and friends after their homes were damaged, further raising

the risks of exposure. French President Emmanuel Macron visited Thursday amid widespread pledges of international aid. But Lebanon, which was already mired in a severe economic crisis, faces a daunting challenge in rebuilding. It's unclear how much support the international community will offer the notoriously corrupt and dysfunctional government. Macron, who port and was to meet with senior Lebanese officials, said the visit is "an opportunity to have a frank and challenging dialogue with the Lebanese political powers and institutions".

He said France will work to coordinate aid. Losses from the blast are estimated to be between \$10 billion and \$15 billion, Beirut Governor Marwan Abboud told Saudi-owned TV station Al-Hadath.



Volunteers clean the rubble and broken glass from the streets in Beirut on Thursday in the aftermath of a massive explosion in the Lebanese capital.

Explosion likely an attack: Trump

Washington, Aug. 6: President Donald Trump on Wednesday continued to suggest that the massive explosion that killed at least 135 people in Lebanon might have been a deliberate attack, even as officials in Lebanon and his own defence chief said it's believed to have be an accident. "Whatever happened, it's terrible, but they don't really know what it is," Trump insist-ed. "Nobody knows yet."

Investigators probing the deadly blast that ripped across Beirut on Tuesday are focused on possible negligence in the storage of tons of ammonium nitrate, a highly explosive fertilizer, in a waterfront warehouse. The Lebanese government ordered the house arrest of several

port officials. On Tuesday, Trump called the explosion a "terrible attack" and said American generals told him it was likely caused by a bomb.

"They seem to think it was an attack," Trump said. "It was a bomb of some kind, yes." Defence Secretary Mark Esper contradicted the president Wednesday, saying most people believe the explosion "was an accident, as reported". But later in the day, Trump insisted nobody knows for sure. "How can you say accident if somebody left some terrible explosive-type devices and things around perhaps — perhaps it was that. Perhaps it was an attack," Trump reporters during a White House briefing. -AP

OZ PLEDGES \$1.4MN FOR **BEIRUT RELIEF**

Beirut, Aug. 6: Australian government has pledged an initial 2 million Australian dollars (\$1.4 million) to the relief effort in Lebanon following the deadly blast that ripped across the capital

Beirut on Tuesday. Prime Minister Scott Morrison told reporters Thursday that the aid will be provided to the World Food Programme and to the Red Cross for food, medical care and essential items. He says his country is considering another round of support.

Morrison says some Australian Embassy personnel were injured but "they are safe and accounted for and we wish them a speedy recovery'

He also thanked the US Embassy officials in Beirut for their support.



A digital billboard of Lord Ram and Ram Mandir at Times Square. New York, to mark the Ayodhya 'Bhoomi Pujan' on Wednesday.

TIMES SQUARE **DISPLAYS LORD RAM'S IMAGE**

New York, Aug. 6: The image of Lord Ram and the grand Ram Temple to be built in Ayodhya beamed across a giant billboard at the iconic Times Square in New York City where members of the Indian community gathered in large numbers to celebrate the 'Bhoomi Pujan' performed by Prime Minister

Narendra Modi. The bright image of Lord Ram, the grand temple and the Indian Tricolour beamed on a giant wrap-around LED display screen on Wednesday. While the organisers had planned to beam the photos from 8 AM to 10 PM on Wednesday, the image of Lord Ram and the temple was displayed for about four hours

till 1 PM. "Extremist groups can try to stymie us but they cannot silence Hindus. Come celebrate our RamJi in Times Square tonight at 7:30 for a diya lighting!! (there will be no displays in the evethe organisers ning).' said on the website ram-

celebration.org. Prominent community leader and President of the American India Public Affairs Committee Jagdish Sewhani and organiser of the event said that the members of the Indian community gathered in huge numbers to celebrate the historic day when PM Modi performed the 'Bhoomi Pujan' of the Ram temple in Ayodhya. Members of the Indian diaspora gathered at Times Square where organisers had planned to light diyas, sing bhajans and distribute sweets.

China sentences 3rd Canadian to death for storing drug at home

Beijing, Aug. 6: China has sentenced a third Canadian citizen to death on drug charges amid a steep decline in relations between the two countries. The Guangzhou Municipal Intermediate Court announced Xu Weihong's penalty on Thursday and said an alleged accomplice, Wen Guanxiong, had been given a life sentence.

Death sentences are automatically referred to China's highest court for review. The brief court statement gave no details but local media in the southern Chinese city at the heart of the country's manufacturing industry said Xu and Wen had gathered ingredients and tools and began making the drug ketamine in October 2016. then stored the final product in Xu's home in Gua-

ngzhou' Haizhu district. Police later confiscated more than 120 kilograms (266 pounds) of the drug from Xu' home and another address, the reports said. Ketamine is a powerful pain killer that has become popular among club goers in China and elsewhere. Relations between China and Canada soured over the arrest of Meng Wanzhou, an executive and the daughter of the founder of Chinese tech giant Huawei, at Vancouver's airport in late 2018. The US wants her ex**US TALKS TOUGHER ON CHINESE TECH, BUT OFFERS FEW SPECIFICS**

New York, Aug. 6: US already been cracking Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Wednesday ogy companies. For instance of the companies of the com called for a big expansion of US government curbs on Chinese technology, saying that it wants to see "untrusted Chinese apps" pulled from the Google and Apple app stores.

Outside experts called Pompeo's proposal vague and possibly illegal. Pompeo called out popular video app TikTok and the messaging app WeChat, which people in the US use to communicate with others in the US and China, as "significant threats to the personal data of American citizens, not to mention tools for CCP

content censorship."
CCP refers to the Chinese Communist Party. The US government has

ance, it has long singled out telecom equipment provider Huawei, encouraging allies not to use its equipment in their highspeed 5G wireless networks and banning US telecom companies from using government funds for equipment and services from Huawei and ZTE, another Chinese telecom equipment provider.

Citing national security concerns, it has also barred Google from providing its Android apps such as Google Maps for Huawei phones. The Federal Communications Commission is considering barring operations of telecom companies China Telecom and China Unicom. -AP

tradited to face fraud charges over the company's dealings with Iran.

Her arrest infuriated Beijing, which sees her case as a political move designed to prevent China's rise as a global technology power.

In apparent retaliation, China detained former Canadian diplomat Michael Kovrig and Canadian national drug smuggling

entrepreneur Michael Spavor, accusing them of vague national security crimes. Soon after. China handed a death sentence to convicted Canadian drug smuggler Robert Schellenberg in a sudden retrial, and in April 2019, gave the death penalty to a Canadian citizen identified as Fan Wei in a multi-

case. China has also placed restrictions on various Canadian exports to China, including canola seed oil, in an apparent attempt to pressure Ottawa into releasing Meng.

Chinese foreign ministry pokesp erson wang wen bin said there was no connection between Xu's sentencing and current China-Canada relations. would like to stress that China's judicial authorities handle the relevant case independently in strict accordance with Chinese law and legal procedures," Wang said at a daily briefing Thursday.

"This case should not inflict any impact on China-Canada relations." Like many Asian nations. China deals out stiff penalties for manufacturing and selling illegal drugs, including the death penalty. In December 2009, Pakistani-British businessman Akmal Shaikh was executed after being convicted of smuggling heroin, despite allegations he was mentally disturbed.

"Death sentences for drug-related crimes that are extremely dangerous will help deter and prevent such crimes," Wang said. "China's judicial authorities handle cases involving criminals of different nationalities in accor-

Nepal: Prachanda meets ex-Speaker

executive chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachister K P Sharma Oli, to resolve the intra-party rift. As Thursday's proposed one-on-one meeting between Oli and Prachand could not take place. Nembang met the executive chairman on behalf of the Prime Minister, a party source said. "The meeting was held

in a positive manner,' Nembang told reporters, without sharing details. He said it is the responsibility of "all of us to create understanding between the two top leaders to save the party from splitting". Prachanda's office said that Nembang visited him to represent Oli in order to create a positive environment to sort out their differences. Oli and Prachanda have

held at least 10 meetings in recent weeks to sort out the differences between them. But, as the Prime Minister did not accept the condition of a one-man-one-post, the talks failed. Oli has refused to give up his post as prime minister as well as a co-chairman of the NCP. A bitter internal feud has been brewing in the

Kathmandu, Aug. 6: ruling NCP since the last Nepal Communist Party's few weeks after top party leaders, including Prachanda, demanded Oli's resanda' on Thursday held ignation, saying his recetalks with former Speak- nt anti-India remarks er Subhash Nembang, a close ally of Prime Min-correct nor diplomaticaly appropriate also against Oli's autocr atic style of functioning.

The differences grew further after Oli said that some of the ruling party leaders are aligning with the southern neighbour to remove him from power after his government issued a new political map incorporating three Indian territories of Kalapani, Lipulekh and Limpiyadhura. The two leaders are also engaged in tightening their grip within the party with the escalation of intra-party feud. On July 28, Prime Minister Oli postponed the crucial Standing Committee meeting for the ninth time.

While Oli wants to call the Secretariat meeting to resolve the differences, Prachanda says it would be inappropriate to call the Secretariat meeting as the Standing Committee meeting that was put off on July 28 is yet to be over. Oli wants the Secretariat meeting to resolve the key issues of intra-party dispute as he now conine-member body. — PTI

PEACE | CEREMONY | Attack witnesses urge world leaders to commit to nuclear disarmament

Survivors mark 75th anniv of 1st atomic attack

Hiroshima, Aug. 6: The dwindling witnesses to the world's first atomic bombing marked its 75th anniversary Thursday, with Hiroshima's mayor and others noting as hypocritical the Japanese government's refusal to sign a nuclear weapons ban treaty. Mayor Kazumi Matsui urged world leaders to more seriously commit to nuclear disarmament, pointing out Japa-

n's failures.
"I ask the Japanese government to heed the appeal of the (bombing survivors) to sign, ratify and become a party to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear

Weapons," Matsui said in his peace declaration. "As the only nation to suffer a nuclear attack,

Japan must persuade the global public to unite with the spirit of Hiroshima.' speech highlights what survivors feel is the hypocrisy of Japan's government, which hosts 50,000 American troops and is protected by the US nuclear umbrella. Tokyo has not signed the nuclear weapons ban treaty adopted in 2017, despite its non-nuclear pledge, a failure to act that atomic bombing survivors and pacifist groups call insincere.

The US dropped its first atomic bomb on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, destroying the city and killing 140,000 people. The US dropped a second bomb three days later on Nagasaki, killing another 70,000. Japan surrendered August 15, ending World War II and its nearly half-century of aggression in Asia. Survivors, their relatives and other participants marked the 8:15 am blast anniversary with a minute of silence. Thursday's peace ceremony at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park was scaled down because of the Coronavirus pandemic.

SURVIVORS, THEIR relatives and other participants marked the 8:15 am blast anniversary with a minute of silence. Thursday's peace ceremony at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park was scaled down because of the Coronavirus pandemic.

The fewer than 1,000 attendees was one-tenth of those attending in past years. Some survivors and their relatives prayed at the park's cenotaph before the

the atomic bombing victims is stored at the cenotaph, whose inscription reads "Let all the souls here rest in peace for we shall not repeat the mistake.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, in his speech at the ceremony, said Japan is committed to nuclear weapons ban but a nuclear free world cannot be achieved overnight and that it has to start from dialogue be-

tween opposite sides. "Japan's position is to serve as a bridge between different sides and patiently promote their dialogue and actions to achieve a

world without nuclear we apons," Abe said. Nuclear policies are divided amid a harsh security environment, so it is necessary to create common ground first,

An aging group of survivors, known as hibakusha, feel a growing urgency to tell their stories to the youth. Elderly survivors, mostly over 83, lamented the slow progress of nuclear disarmament. They expressed anger over what they said was the Japanese government's reluctance to help and listen to those who suffered from the atomic bombing.

NEW DELHI | FRIDAY | 7 AUGUST 2020

quick

INDICATORS 38,025.45 0.96 0.89 Nifty 50 11,200.15 S&P 500³ 3,326.43 -0.04 0.04 Dollar (₹) 74.92 -0.81 Pound Sterling (₹) 98.64 -0.35 88.78 1.36 Gold (10gm)* (₹) 55,850▲752 Brent crude (\$/bbl)* 45.60 0.43 5.862 0.035 IN 10-Yr bond yield US 10-Yr T-bill yield* 0.515 -0.028

* As of 10:30 PM IST

IDBI Bank in deal to sell 27% stake in insurance JV

IDBI Bank on Thursday said it has entered into a share purchase agreement (SPA) with the other two joint venture partners in IDBI Federal Life Insurance Company (IFLIC), to divest 27 per cent of its stake for ₹595.30 crore. In June, the private sector lender had informed about the stake salepurchase proposal among the three JV partners. Currently. LIC-promoted IDBI Bank holds 48 per cent in IFLIC.

Gold and silver prices touch new record high



Gold and silver prices touched record levels in the national capital on Thursday and the yellow metal rose by ₹225 to ₹56,590 per 10 grams amid strong rally in the international market, according to HDFC Securities, Silver price surged by ₹1,932 to ₹75,755 per kilogram. On Wednesday, it had closed at 7/3,823 per kg. In the previous trade, the yellow metal had closed at ₹56,365 per 10 grams.

Yes Bank on Thursday said LIC has acquired close to 5 per cent shareholding in the bank by purchasing shares from the open market. With the fresh acquisition, the hold of LIC has increased from 0.75 per cent to 4.98 per cent, Yes Bank said in a regulatory filing to stock exchanges. LIC purchased 105.98 crore shares, reflecting 4.23 per cent stake, of the bank from the open market, the filing said.

Adani reports consolidated loss of ₹65.67cr

Adani Enterprises on Thursday reported a consolidated loss of ₹65.67 crore for the first quarter ended June 30, impacted by Covid-19 pandemic-induced lockdowns. The company had clocked a consolidated profit of ₹570 crore in the corresponding quarter a year ago, the company said in a BSE filing. Its consolidated income for the guarter declined to ₹5,502 crore, as against ₹10,685 crore during the year-ago period.

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RBI expects higher inflation, Gold can get negative economic growth

■ Pauses rate cuts for now; maintains accommodative monetary stance

Belying expectations, the Monetary Policy Commit-tee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Thursday kept rates unchanged on Thursday owing to uncertainty around inflation despite signs of growth faltering further. The MPC voted to maintain an accommodative stance, thus opening up possibilities for more future rate cuts.

'While economic activity had started to recover from the lows of April-May, a surge in fresh infections have forced reclamping of lockdowns in several cities and states to "level-off" various highfrequency indicators,' RBI governor Shaktikanta Das said in his mone-

tary policy address.

The MPC expects headline inflation to remain elevated in Q2FY21 and sees it easing in the second half of the financial year. For 2021, the real GDP growth is expected to be negative.

It refrained from providing growth-inflation forecasts while sticking to the direction based guidance.

"Real GDP growth in the first half of the year is estimated to remain in the contraction zone. For the year 2020-21 as a whole, real GDP growth is also estimated to be negative," Das said.

He said that the RBI will do whatever is required to revive the economy in the

wake of the pandemic. "With Covid-19 infections rising under fragile micro-economic and financial conditions, we propose to take regulatory and developmental measures, enhance liquidity support for financial markets, ease financial stress while strengthening credit discipline, improve the flow of credit, deepen digital payment systems and facilitate innovations by leveraging technology."

He said there is enough liquidity at present and that the RBI is using several other monetary operations to boost liquidity in the banking system.

All the six members of the MPC voted for a status

Highlights

 Policy rate unchanged at 4%, reverse repo at 3.35% Loans against gold **RESERVE BANK** enhanced to 90% of the OF INDIA value from current 75% to mitigate COVID-19 impact

Bi-monthly on households Monetary To continue with the accommodative stance to **Policy** revive growth Supporting economic Review

> in conduct of monetary policy in uncertain global Sees upside risk to inflation, projects moderation in Oct-Mar

recovery assumes primacy

GDP growth to be egative in current fiscal Stressed MSME borrowers eligible for loan restructuring if their accounts were classified

 Proposes Online Dispute Allows lenders to provide window to restructure Resolution for digital loans of corporate, individual borrowers to Rs 5,000 crore additional ease COVID-19 impact liquidity facility to be provided by the National A new resolution window

for corporate and personal Housing Bank to boost liquidity in housing sector loans to be framed Rs 5,000 crore liquidity To put in place safeguards support to NABARD to aid for opening of current agri sector accounts and overdraft Economic activity had accounts for customers

in offline mode while

Startups get RBI's priority tag

in boosting the economy,

RBI has broadened the

scope of PSL to include

As per PSL norms, RBI mandates banks to lend a

certain portion of their

funds to specified sectors

like agriculture, micro,

small and medium enter-

prises, export credit, education, housing, social infrastructure, renew-

Further, RBI has also

increased the PSL limits

for renewable energy

able energy, etc.

start-ups

safeguarding interest of

availing credit facilities started to recover, but from multiple banks surge in infection has Priority Sector Lending forced imposition (PSL) to include startups of lockdowns Increased limits for Monetary Policy renewable energy, including Committee conscious of solar power, and small and primary mandate to achieve inflation target marginal farmers and 'Weaker Sections' under PSL of 4% within a band To allow a pilot scheme of +/- 2%

for small value payments users, liability protection GRAPHICS _

the PSL guidelines, an

incentive framework is

also being put in place

for banks to address the

regional disparities in

the flow of priority sector credit. While higher

weightage will be assigned for incremental

priority sector credit in the identified districts

having lower credit flow

a lower weightage would

be assigned in identified

districts where the credit

Positive Pay, offline card payment soon

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, AUG. 6

Enhancing the security of cheque payments, RBI introduce Positive Pay for all cheques of ₹50,000 and above.

As for digital payments, RBI also wants offline payments through cards, mobile devices to become possible for remote areas with low internet connectivity.

In order to check increasing cheque frauds, RBI

This measure will cover approximately 20 per cent of all cheques issued in the country in volume terms and 80 per cent of cheques in terms of

value.

RBI also wants to make through offline payment through cards, wallets and mobile devices possible. "There has been considerable growth in digital payments using mobile phones, cards, wallets, etc. Lack of internet con-nectivity or low speed of internet, especially in remote areas, is a major impediment in adoption of digital payments," the central bank said in its

has decided to introduce a mechanism of Positive Pay for all cheques of value ₹50,000 and above, RBI said.

you 90% of its value as loan

SANGEETHA G. CHENNAI, AUG. 6

In order to provide higher liquidity to households and small businesses, RBI has increased the Loan-To-Value (LTV) ratio of gold loans offered by banks from 75 per cent to 90 per cent. However, the higher LTV will not be available for non-banking finance companies.

As per the current guidelines, gold loans sanctioned by banks for nonagricultural purposes should not exceed 75 per cent of the value of gold ornaments and jewellery. "With a view to mitigat-ing the impact of Covid-19

on households, it has been decided to increase the permissible loan to value ratio (LTV) for such loans to 90 per cent. This relaxation shall be available till March 31, 2021," said RBI. Higher LTV will put

more money in the hands of the customer for the same volume of gold pledged. Gold prices have appreciated more than 40 per cent since the beginning of the year. Due to the price appreciation, the loan amount has naturally increased by 40 per cent even at an LTV of 75 per cent. Once the LTV is increased to 90 per cent, this will increase the loan

THE NEW LTV will be available for a window of eight months. Fresh loans issued post March 31, 2021 will come under 75 per cent LTV.

• THE HIGHER LTV will not be available for nonbanking finance companies, including those operating in exclusive gold loan business.

amount by another 15 per cent. This will solve the liquidity issues of small scale business persons and traders, who account for the largest chunk of the customer base, as well as individuals to a great

The new LTV will be available for a window of eight months. Fresh loans issued post March 31, 2021 will come under 75 per

"LTV of 90 per cent in an increasing gold price scenario is fine. Only we must keep an eye on the margin because 10 per cent is a small cushion. This is still manageable. This will help the small businesses, micro and small units who avail gold loans for business needs as well," said Padmaja Chunduru, MD and CEO

Don't focus overly on ratings: Rajan

flow is higher.

policymakers should focus on protecting the economy as businesses struggle amid the coronavirus pandemic instead of being overly focused on think, former Reserve Bank of India governor Raghuram Rajan said on

SANGEETHA G

lending (PSL).

In a major boost to start-

ups, now their loans will

come under priority sector lending. RBI will also

look into regional dispar-

ities in priority sector

The PSL guidelines we-

re last reviewed in April

2015. In these five years,

the country has seen a lot

of activity in the start-up

space. Acknowledging

the potential of start-ups

Thursday "It is also important to convince both domestic quo in rates. and international inve-

associated with the pandemic is over, we will return to fiscal responsibility over the medium term, and the government should do more to convince them of that," Rajan told the Global Markets Forum.

The government has announced several initia tives to help the poor and small- and medium-size businesses, but actual

ernment's measures has been estimated at just about one per cent of GDP. Several attribute the fiscal prudence to fear of a downgrade after Moody's

look in early June followed closely by a change in outlook from Fitch. The RBI and government have certainly been cooperating, but it seems

cut India's rating and out-

court to do more," Rajan

He said the RBI needs to focus on whether credit is reaching the stressed areas of the economy and also if the viable firms were able to access credit and not the unviable ones.

'And I think that's where it has to focus its attentions, because resources, as you well know, are limited in India." — Reuters

a sigh of relief **RAVI RANJAN PRASAD** MUMBAI, AUG. 6

Sensex heaves

The Sensex and the Nifty-50 gained close to one per cent as RBI announced several measures to provide relief to borrowers and others hit badly by Covid-19 pandemic and kept it's policy stance as accommodative, raising hopes of further interest

rate easing in future. The Sensex gained 362.12 points or 0.96 per cent and regained 38,000 levels closing at 38,025.45. The Nifty-50 index closed at 11,200.15

up 98.50 or 0.89 per cent. Banks and real estate stocks gained as RBI didn't extend loan moratori-

earlier till August 31.
Deepak Jasani, head,
Retail Research, HDFC
Securities said, "Banking stocks have reacted positively despite no rate cut as the feared extension of moratorium has not happened and they will be spared of the requirement of high provisions if by Septem-ber 30, the new committee's recommenda-

LIC acquires 5% stake in Yes Bank from mart

Toyota Kirloskar Motor rolled out the new Toyota Fortuner TRD limited edition starting at ₹34.98 lakh.

Toyota eyes boost in sales with TRD

MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, AUG, 6

Toyota Kirloskar Motor on Thursday introduced the new Toyota Fortuner TRD limited edition starting at ₹34.98 lakh to boost sales in Asia's third

biggest economy. On the outside, the new Fortuner TRD gets dusk sensing Bi-Beam LED projector headlamps with LED DRLs, chrome plated door handles and window belt-line, LED fog lamps and rear combination lamps, dual tone roof, charcoal black R18 alloy wheels, and auto fold

The car is equipped with a range of digital high-tech optional accessories under the special technology package, which provides features like headup display (HUD), tyre pressure monitor (TPMS), digital video recorder (DVR), wireless smartphone charger and wel-

come door lamp. Also, it also gets air Ionizer which is first from

Toyota in India. This limited-specific Fortuner is powered by a 2.8-litre, 4-cylinder diesel engine producing 177 PS of maximum power and a peak torque of 450 Nm. The engine comes mated to a 6-speed automatic transmission sequential and paddle shift. It is offered with idling automatic

stop/start function.
"The Fortuner TRD Limited Edition is yet another effort to cater to the customer demands. An important accessory to ensure customer safety is the air ionizer owing to the concerns about the air we breathe in these chal-lenging times," said Naveen Soni, senior vice-president, sales and service at Toyota Kirloskar

"What's more, the Fortuner TRD is truly exclusive and only limited units are being made available for SUV aficionados in the country,' the senior vice-president explained.

Biz optimism slips to record low in Q2

New Delhi, Aug. 6: Business optimism for the July-September quarter slumped to a record low due to sharp rise in Covid-19 cases, the extension of lockdown in containment zones and staggered easrestrictions, according to a report.

Dun & Bradstreet Composite Business Optimism Index for the July-September quarter fell to a record low of 29.4. The index registered a decline of 40.6 per cent over the last quarter. The BOI covered about 350 senior executives in June this year.

"The spike in the number of positive Covid-19 cases, the extension of lockdown in containment zones and the staggered easing of restrictions affected the business optimism levels," said Arun

Global Chief st, Dun & Singh, Gl Economist,

Bradstreet. All six optimism indices volume of sales, net profits, selling prices, new orders, inventories and employees — have registered a decline as compared to the previous quarter, the report said.

The plethora of containment and non-containment zones, which are near-impossible to track in real time, and the rapid change in guidelines adopted by the various local governments have led to considerable uncertainty amongst businesses that are planning to resume their operations," Singh said, adding that outlook remained sub-dued in spite of measures taken to support the flow **SANGEETHA G** CHENNAI, AUG. 6

Leading ed-tech company Byju's has acquired Mumbai-based ed-tech start-up, WhiteHat Jr for \$300 million. With the National Education Policy pushing for skills such as coding, this will provide

Founded in November 2018, WhiteHat Jr specializes in coding. With coding fast emerging as a key skill for the future, this integration will help Byju's to further expand its offerings. This partner-ship is timely with the government pushing skills such as coding from early classes with the New Education Policy (NEP) 2020, Byju's said in a release.

WhiteHat Jr has pres-

Byju's acquires coding startup co for \$300m WHITEHAT JR. helps

Byju's a major boost.

kids aged 6 to 14 years build commercial-ready games, animations and apps online using the fundamentals of coding. The startup offers four levels of courses to children grades 1 to 9.

ence in India and the US. It had recently announced plans to expand to other markets like Canada, UK, Australia and New Zealand.

According to sources, the coding platform was acquired in an all-cash deal of \$300 million.

After the acquisition, Byju's will make significant investments in WhiteHat Jr's technology platform, product innovation while expanding the teacher base to cater to demand from new mar-kets. WhiteHat Jr. founder Karan Bajaj will continue to lead and scale this business in India and the US.

WhiteHat Jr. helps kids aged 6 to 14 years build commercial-ready games, animations and apps online using the fundamentals of coding. WhiteHat Jr. offers four levels of courses — beginner, intermediate, advanced and professional — for students in grades 1-9. Kids create complex games, animations and apps using logic, structure, sequence, com-mands and algorithmic thinking. Early graduates of the course have created professional-ready apps downloadable on the App Store at ages as young as seven years old, claims

US EMI firm plans to enter India by yearend

Inc is testing its buy-nowpay-later service in India for a potential launch at the end of the year, its chief executive officer said, capitalising on rapid global growth in online shopping as competition intensifies in the sector.

Moving into India would mark an ambitious plan for the firm as the secondmost populous country gravitates more toward a cash-less society and more people purchase goods on the internet during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Minneapolis-based

interest-free instalment loans at certain online undertook an stores. A\$86.3 million (\$61.99 million) equity raise in July, out of which nearly a fifth was earmarked to test international markets. Sezzle currently only operates in the United

which offers

States and Canada. "If this works, we have a massive opportunity in India ... We think it's well worth the opportunity,' chief executive officer

Charlie Youakim said,

pointing to a digital boom

in India that presents a

• IN THE THREE months from March, Sezzle Inc added more than 300,000 new customers in India, highlighting the growing appeal of Buy-Now-Pay-Later (BNPL) firms.

• THE COMPANY'S CEO said it has started the pilot in July and is integrating with the Unified Payments Interface (UPI). Sezzle currently only operates in the United States and Canada.

billion dollar-plus gold mine and could follow the success of firms like

SoftBank-backed Paytm. Youakim said Sezzle started the pilot in July, but was still integrating with the Unified Payments Interface — a Unified system that would power

multiple bank accounts into a mobile application and is evaluating repayment data.

"Assuming expectations are met, we launch UPI sometime this month and then we'll have some sort of sense come end of October and then we can

turn on ahead of the holiday season," Youakim In the three months from

March, Sezzle added more than 300,000 new customers, highlighting the growing appeal of BNPLs. Spurred by recent growth, more players are moving into the industry, which first took off in

Australia.
Tencent's investment in Afterpay this year was seen by analysts as a possible entry point into China for the BNPL

Reuters

Italian Sara Errani showed signs of

rallying past Kristna

Pliskova in a hard-

fought 3-6, 6-4, 6-3

match to make the

fewer ball kids, a limited

number of fans and no

post-match handshakes

between opponents. Errani, who lost the 2012

French Open final to Maria

Sharapova, had struggled

to regain her form after

serving a two-month ban in

2017 due to an anti-doping violation. Her ranking is

down from a career-high of

who won the Sicilian tour-

nament twice and also finished runner-up twice -- to

go with three titles in the

It was Errani's 180th

career win on clay — more than any other active play-

doubles event.

No. 5 in 2013 to No. 169. Palermo brings back good memories for Errani,

protocols include

quarterfinals.

New

reviving her clay-

court prowess by

WOMEN'S TENNIS

Palermo, Aug. 6: Former French Open finalist Sara

Errani sĥowed signs of

reviving her clay-court prowess by rallying past

Kristna Pliskova 3-6, 6-4, 6-3 Wednesday to reach the Palermo Ladies Open

It was the second consec-

utive three-set win for

Errani, who received a wild-card entry for the first

tour-level tournament — for men or women — fol-

lowing a five-month break

due to the Coronavirus

pandemic. Errani will next face ris-

ing French player Fiona

Ferro, who beat eighth-

Aliaksandra Sasnovich eased past Jasmine Paolini

6-0, $6-\overline{2}$ for her fifth win in

five days; and 19-year-old

Italian wild-card entry

Elisabetta Cocciaretto eliminated sixth-seeded Donna Vekic in straight

Players and officials for

the tournament are being

tested every four days for

Covid-19 and one player

who tested positive with-drew over the weekend.

Alexandrova 7-5, 6-2.

Also, Aliaksandra

sets 6-2, 6-4.

Ekaterina

qualifier

quarterfinals.

Errani rallies for

win at Palermo

Camps for junior athletes from Oct.

New Delhi: The national training camps for junior athletes will begin in a phased manner from October 1, the Sports Authority of India (SAI) said on

Wednesday. It was decided in SAI's Mission Olympic Cell review meeting that training of junior athletes at its National Centres of Excellence (NCOE), shut since March due to the COVID-19 outbreak, will start in a phased manner from October. The SAI, however, said that

the respective state governments where the NCOEs are situated will take the final call, keeping in mind the health and safety of athletes and coaches amid the pandemic.

In view of the preparation for Olympics and to ensure that athletes have world-class infrastructure and equipment to train with, the SAI has also decided to enhance the funds at all its NCOEs.

To ensure a safe environment for all the athletes, especially those joining the camps in their teenage years, a series of sensitisation workshops will be held in these NCOEs. - PTI

258 juniors make

TOPS scheme

New Delhi: The Sports Authority of India (SAI) on Wednesday shortlisted 258 athletes from across 12 sporting disciplines for support through Target Olympic Podium Scheme Developmental Group, also known as Junior TOPS. The support will be extended through a group/systems approach and a monthly out of pocket allowance of ₹25,000 will be given to every athlete. Of the 12 disciplines, 16 athletes have been shortlisted in athletics, 34 in archery, 27 in badminton, four in cycling, seven in table tennis, 70 in shooting, 14 in swimming, 11 in judo, 36 in boxing, 16 in

weightlifting, five in rowing and 18 in wrestling. The SAI's Mission Olympic Cell shortlisted the athletes, including the 85 named before the Covid-19 lockdown. They will be groomed for the 2024 and

2028 Olympics. A SAI statement further said the formal induction of the athletes in the development group would be undertaken after setmechanism. — PT

Yuvraj's house flooded in Mumbai

New Delhi: Out-of-favour India hockey striker Yuvraj Walmiki on Wednesday faced a peculiar problem as he tried to drain out water which flowed into his house in the wake of the heavy

rains in Mumbai Yuvrai posted a video on his Twitter handle, where he was seen trying to drain out anklelevel water from the drawing room of his flat. In the 28-second video, Yuvraj

sought help from Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation as well as Maharashtra Tourism Minister Aaditya Thackeray. A red alert has been issued for 'extremely heavy' rainfall for

the Mumbai Metropolitan Region as heavy showers continued for over 24 hours, crippling the city's lifelines. The IMD has forecast spells of more heavy to very heavy rainfall for Wednesday and Thursday.

Yuvraj, 30, was part of the Indian team that played in the 2014 Word Cup at The Hague in the Netherlands. — PT

TIGHT ROPE WALK

BCCI sets strict guidelines for IPL teams

New Delhi, Aug. 6: Eight different hotels for the eight participating teams, two mandatory negative Covid-19 test reports before flying to the UAE and punishment for any breach of the bio-secure protocol are part of the BCCI's SOP for the IPL that was handed over to the franchises on Wednesday.

The document, accessed states that every fran-chisee's medical team should obtain the "medical and travel history of all players and support staff" since March 1 this

"All Indian players and team support staff must undergo two Covid-19 PCR tests, 24 hours apart, in the week before assem-

bling in the franchises' city of choice," it states.
"This will help reduce the risk of cross infection within the group before flying to the UAE.

Breach of any Bio-Secure Environment protocols by players and team support staff will be punisĥable under the IPL Code of Conduct Rules.

Anyone testing positive for Covid-19 will be quarantined and after completion of a 14-day period, the individual will have to undergo two Covid-19 tests, 24 hours apart.

"...if both test reports are negative, he/she may be allowed to fly out to the

"After arrival in UAE, there will be tests on Day 1, 3 and 6 with testing every fifth day throughout the tournament." The SOP states that all

"franchise teams will be put up in different hotels." Team members must be allotted rooms in a separate wing of the hotel that has a separate centralised air conditioning (AC) unit than the rest of the hotel,"

"After the third negative test, team members may be allowed to meet each other within the Bio-Secure Environment. However, wearing a face mask and social distancing protocols must be fol-

lowed at all times. The SOP also requires teams to order food in individual rooms and avoid use of common dining areas "to prevent cross infection and coming in contact with other hotel guests.'

Eight different participating teams will be put in eight different hotels.

Team members must be allotted rooms in a separate wing of the hotel.

Every player, staff and family members will have to get two mandatory negative Covid-19 test reports before flying to the UAE.

Punishment for any breach of the bio-secure protocol.



Royal Challengers Bangalore's captain Virat Kohli (left) and coach Gary Kirsten look on during a training session in

Empty stands extended room

New Delhi, Aug. 6: The BCCI's Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the upcoming IPL recommends that teams use "empty stands" as extended dressing rooms for training and matches while strategy meetings can now be held outdoors in order to maintain social distancing.

The IPL, to be held from September 19 in the UAE, won't feature any toss mascot this year which means the BCCI will lose out on another avenue of earning sponsorship

> While players and sup-port staff's families can join them, they won't be allowed to travel in the team bus and can't leave the bio bubble.

> According to the SOP which was handed to the franchises the teams will be encouraged to use the stands for dressing room purpose which helps in maintaining social distancing. "The

Bio-Secure Environment means only essential staff will be on site and no members of the public will be allowed. Therefore there will be more vacant areas at the

men to have scored hun-

dreds in three successive

Test innings as his excel-

lent century led the

tourists to 326 all out

against England on the

second day of the series

Masood batted for nearly

eight hours in largely

bowler-friendly conditions for a Test-best 156.

He received excellent sup-

opener at Old Trafford.

Left-handed

BCCI, VIVO OFFICIALLY PUT OFF DEAL FOR THE SEASON

New Delhi, Aug. 6: The BCCI on Thursday suspended the IPL title sponsorship deal with Chinese mobile phone company Vivo for the event's upcoming edition amid the Sino-India border face-off.

The BCCI sent out a one-line statement, without giving any details, to say that Vivo will not be associated with the IPL this year. "The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and vivo Mobile India Pvt Ltd have decided to sus-

pend their partnership for Indian Premier League in 2020," the press release stated. The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and vivo Mobile India Pvt Ltd have mutually decid-

ed to pause their partnership for the 2020 season of Indian Premier League," it stated.

stadium and hence the dressing room does not have to remain within the traditional area

Cricket 'Venue Operation teams should consider using appropriate areas beyond the normal dressing room," the SOP states.

Also, the teams have been asked to use electronic team sheets rather than captains carrying hard copies of their play-

ing XI list.
The SOP also states that

been struggling at 176-5.

The pair ran England

ragged, with even defen-

sive shots producing well-

taken runs. Pakistan had

managed just 48 runs for

the loss of three wickets

in Thursday's first session to reach 187-5 at

Brief scores: Pakistan 326 in

109.3 overs (B. Azam 69,

Shan Masood 150, S. Khan

45, S. Board 3/54, J. Archer

Pakistan on top

Manchester, Aug. 6: Shan (45) in a sixth-wicket Masood joined a select stand of 105 that turned group of Pakistan bats- the tide after Pakistan had

lunch.

opener

franchises might install "Scalene Hypercharge Corona (Shycocan), a device that

has the ability to neutralise 99.9 per cent of the coronavirus that might be floating in the air in closed spaces.

For the medical team, including physios and SOP recommends that if they need to get in physical contact with the player (massage sessions etc), they have to wear PPE kits. -PTI

BOARDS OF OZ,

New Delhi, Aug. 6: The heads of BCCI and Cricket Australia will be connecting virtually to discuss the hosting of two T20 World Cups in the next two years when the ICC's all-powerful board meets on Friday.

The decision will also be impacted by the stand of the two boards on the next ICC chairman, the nomination process of which is yet to be announced. It is expected that BCCI

2021 and 2022 editions. It is expected that Cricket Australia will like to host the T20 World Cup in October 2021 as it had already started preparations and but BCCI also doesn't want to forego its right to host the tournament in 2021.

INDIA TO MEET ON WORLD CUP

president Ganguly and secretary Jay Shah along with CA's Earl Eddings and Nick Hockley will reach a consensus on the hosting of



off French Open

Kyrgios dropped a huge hint Thursday that he will skip the French Open, saying the chances of him travelling to Europe this year were "slim to none"

opinionated last week Australian pulled out of the upcoming US Open in New York due the pandemic, with world number two Rafael Nadal following suit.

Kyrgios, ranked just 40 but a big drawcard, said he wasn't surprised by the Spaniard's decision, noting that the clay court king was likely "eyeing the French Open" in late September. "And if I was to play I'd

probably definitely rather go to Europe (than America) at this time of year for sure with every-thing going on," he added to *Channel Nine* television from his Canberra base.

But Kyrgios suggested

It's a very slim chance I'll play in Europe. Almost slim to none to be honest. I'm going to use this (time) to stay home, train, be with my

- NICK KYRGIOS Australian

tennis player that was also unlikely, casting serious doubt over his presence at Roland Garros. "It's a verv slim chance I'll play in Europe. Almost

"I'm going to use this (time) to stay home, train, be with my family, be with my friends and I'm just going to act responsibly, and wait till I think there's better circumstances to play," he added.

slim to none to be honest,

Kyrgios also cast doubt on the future of next year's Australian Open

ZIDANE LEAVES OUT BALE FOR CITY CLASH

Madrid: Gareth Bale has not been included in the Real Madrid squad for the Champions League match against Manchester City. Coach Zinedine Zidane left the Wales forward out of the list of 24 players who will travel for the round-of-16 match in England on Friday. Bale didn't get many playing minutes under Zidane in the final stage of the Spanish league, a competition Madrid won. His last appearance was on June 24. Colombian midfielder James Rodrguez also won't make the trip. — AP

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port from Shadab Khan 3/59) vs England. Focused Apurvi sets sights on Olympics

DEEPIKA DAS NEW DELHI, JULY 6

The Tokyo Olympics have been pushed back by a but shooter Apurvi Chandela is all focussed and ready to give her best shot whenever it takes place. Recently Apurvi has been nominat-

Ratna award. One of the medal prospects for India at the Olympics, the world No. 5 shooter is utilising the break to hone her skills even better.

ed by her state Rajasthan

for the Rajiv Gandhi Khel

'I'm preparing myself for any kind of situation that can arise, as conditions are a bit uncertain at the moment. But I am focused on my training and preparations and I for Apurvi told this paper from Jaipur.

The 27-year-old 10m air rifle shooter, who won two gold medals at the ISSF

disappointed with the postponement of the Olympics, but was worried about the possible future effects of the coronavirus pandemic.

She has donated ₹3 lakh towards the Prime Minister's Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations Fund (PM CARES Fund) and ₹2 lakh to Rajasthan relief fund set up to support the battle against COVID-19.

"I have a shooting range at home, so I've been training at home. So there's not much change in my preparations apart from the fact that our international competitions like World Cups have been cancelled, but that's the need of the hour as it's important for everyone to just stay at home and avoid going out anywhere," she said.

"I shoot for about three

hours in the morning and

I exercise in the evenings.

My days at home are quite packed. I practice yoga regularly and it helps me stay calm and also fresh. I've been working on specific exercises to strengthen certain muscles," she

Apurvi, who trains under former national champion and mentor Rakesh Manpet in Bengaluru, had a disappointing outing at the Rio Olympics, but this time she was determined to come up with better

"A lot has changed over the last four years, I have more experience now, and

in Manchester on Thursday.

Apurvi Chandela

England fast bowler James Anderson (centre) cele-

brates taking the wicket of Pakistan's Babar Azam on

the second day of the first Test cricket at Old Trafford

I have learnt to handle situations better. There has been some growth in the kind of results I have achieved in the last two years. So I'm putting in all my effort.
"I think the experience

at the Rio Games is already coming in handy, as there are a lot of changes in my lead up to Tokyo, compared to Rio. So any kind of experience is good as it prepares you

way," added 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games gold medallist. So what are the grey

areas that she is working "Well as a sportsperson I have to work upon all kinds of elements like the technical and mental aspect, along with my nutrition and physio therapy. I have a support team who's working with me closely," Apurvi said.

Asked on the pressure of expectations as a record number of shooters qualified for the Olympics? She said, "Expectations have always been there, that's what makes us think that we are capable of achieving greater heights and that we also have the faith of people with us. We have a strong Indian shooting team, and each and every shooter is preparing to perform well on the given day. We all want to make the country proud.

NOT GIVEN FAIR CHANCE IN FOOTBALL, SAYS BOLT

Sydney, Aug. 6: Sprint legend Usain Bolt on Thursday claimed he wasn't given "a fair chance" to prove himself in Australia's A-League after a failed attempt to

become a professional footballer. The Jamaican, an eight-time Olympic champion, tried out with the Central Coast Mariners in 2018 after quitting athletics, hoping to fulfil a childhood dream to

become a footballer. His quest garnered worldwide attention, which intensified when he scored two goals in a pre-season

But his abilities were questioned, notably by former Ireland striker Andy Keogh who said he had a "touch like a trampoline", and contract talks failed. Bolt told Australia's Channel Nine television net-

work: "I think I didn't get a fair chance. "I didn't do it how I wanted to do it, but it's something I think I would've been good at," he added.

"But it's just one of those things you miss out on and just have to move on." Bolt, the 100m and 200m world record holder, had previously tried out with clubs in Germany, South Africa and Norway.