

# THE ASIAN AGE

NEW DELHI SUNDAY 30 AUGUST 2020



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**‘Black Panther’ Chadwick Boseman dies of cancer. He was 43.**



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**Nadda holds meet with BJP MPs over Bihar elections**

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**Actress Richa Chadha gushes about Rahul Dravid**



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## WINDOWS



Demonstrators walk on Pennsylvania Avenue during a march in Washington on Friday, the 57th anniversary of the Martin Luther King's ‘I Have A Dream’ speech. — AP

## Army called in to rescue people in flood-hit MP dist

**Bhopal:** The Army has been called in to rescue people in the marooned areas in Madhya Pradesh's Hosangabad district following flash floods in Narmada caused by heavy downpour in the region in the last 24 hours. Incessant rains in the last 24 hours have caused floods in Narmada, leaving major parts of Hosangabad district marooned. The river was flowing 9 ft above danger level. “NDRF teams have also been pressed into service,” said Hosangabad divisional commissioner Rainish Srivastav. **Full report on Page 4**

## 1 jawan, 3 militants killed in Kashmir

**Srinagar:** A soldier of the Indian Army was killed and three terrorists were gunned down on Saturday during an encounter in Pulwama district of J&K, officials said. Earlier, three terrorists were killed in an encounter in Shopian. **Full report on Page 3**

## IIT-I to teach key courses in Sanskrit

**Indore:** The Indian Institute of Technology here has introduced a unique course to impart mathematical and scientific knowledge from ancient texts in Sanskrit, an official said on Saturday. The course was started in a bid to expose the present generation to ancient knowledge, he said. **Full report on Page 4**

## COUNTERPOINT



**The car will suit Indian conditions more!**

## WEATHER

Max: 35°C  
Min: 24°C  
RH: 66%  
Rain: 23mm

Forecast: Rainfall

## ASTROGUIDE

**Sarvari:** Dakshinayana  
**Tithi:** Bhadrpada Shuddha Dwadasi till 8.22 am  
**Star:** Uttarashada till 1.53 pm  
**Varjyam:** 6.05 pm to 7.46 pm  
**Durmuhurtam:** 4.49 pm to 5.38 pm  
**Rahukalam:** 4.30 pm to 6 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.46 PM  
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.58 AM  
MOONRISE TOMORROW 4.24 PM  
MOONSET TODAY 2.56 AM

## INDIA UNLOCK 4

# Metros from Sept. 7, gatherings from 21st

*No restrictions on inter-state movement from Sept. 1*

**New Delhi, Aug. 29:** The Union home ministry on Saturday issued the Unlock 4 guidelines under which Metro trains will be allowed to resume services from September 7 in a graded manner, while political, social and religious congregations of up to 100 people will be permitted from September 21.

However, schools, colleges and other educational and coaching institutions will remain closed for students till September 30, with some relaxations for students of classes 9 to 12.

In a significant directive, the home ministry said that state governments shall not impose any local lockdown outside the containment zones without prior consultation with the central government.

This bears significance as sporadic and weekend lockdowns have been implemented by various state governments across the country. The coronavirus induced country-wide lockdown was first announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi from March 25 and it was extended in phases till May 31. The Unlock process of the country had begun on June 1 with the graded reopening of commercial, social, religious and other activities.

Under the Unlock 4 phase, social, academic, sports, entertainment, cultural, religious, political functions and other congregations will be permitted with a ceiling of 100 people, with effect from September 21.

## DELHI METRO BACK ON TRACK



▶ Metro train services can resume in a phased manner from September 7

▶ Lockdowns can't be imposed outside containment zones

▶ Social, political, academic, sports, religious and other functions will be allowed with a limit of 100 people

▶ States may allow up to 50 per cent of teaching and non-teaching staff to be called to schools at a time

▶ Students of classes 9 to 12 may be permitted to visit their schools in areas outside the containment zones

However, such limited gatherings can be held with the mandatory wearing of face masks, social distancing and provision for thermal scanning and hand wash or sanitizer. The permission to hold political and other gatherings came ahead of the Bihar assembly elections, which are due in October-November.

The home ministry said that after extensive consultation with states and UTs, it has been decided that schools, colleges, educational and coaching institutions will continue to remain closed for students and regular class activity up to September 30. The ministry said that states and Union Territory governments may permit up to 50 per cent of teaching and non-teaching staff to be called to the schools at a time for online teaching or tele-

counselling and related work. Students of classes 9 to 12 may be permitted to visit their schools in areas outside the containment zones only on a voluntary basis for taking guidance from their teachers. Cinema halls, swimming pools, entertainment parks, theatres and similar places will remain shut and international air travel of passengers, except as permitted by MHA, will not be allowed. Open-air theatres will be permitted to open with effect from September 21. Metro rail services, which have been suspended since March 22, will be allowed to resume with effect from September 7 in a graded manner.

Moreover, there will be no restriction on inter-state and intra-state movement of persons and goods. — PTI

# 19 injured as police fires at Muharram procession in J&K

**YUSUF JAMEEL SRINAGAR, AUG. 29**

At least 19 mourners were injured when the police fired teargas canisters and pellet shotguns to disperse a Muharram tazia procession in Srinagar's Bemina area on Saturday.

Hospital sources and witnesses said that 12 of the injured were hit by pellets and that the condition of at least one of them, who received multiple pellet wounds in the face, is stated to be critical.

The police burst teargas canisters to disperse the Shia mourners in Shalimar area as well, on the outskirts of the city, later during the day.

However, a large number of mourners took to the streets in congested Gaw Kadal area of the summer capital and amid chanting of slogans and rhymes in praise of Imam Hussain, the grandson of Islam's Prophet Muhammad who was martyred along with 71 of his family members and companions in the Battle of Karbala (Iraq) in October 680, began intense self-flagellation. The witnesses said that the police and other security forces watched them from a distance and did not try to interfere unlike at Bemina and Shalimar.

The police authorities said that only “mild force” was used against

## Farming must be taught in schools: Modi

**New Delhi, Aug. 29:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday pitched for taking farm education to middle school level, saying necessary reforms have been made in this regard in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. “There is a need to take knowledge related to agriculture and its practical application to school level. Efforts are (on) to introduce the Agriculture subject at middle school level in villages,” Modi said.

This will develop agriculture related understanding in students and enable them to give information about agriculture, its modern farming techniques and marketing, to their family members, he said.

— PTI

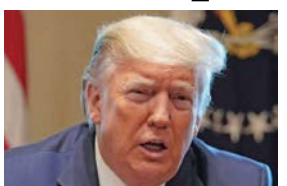
■ More on Page 3

# ‘Kamala not competent, Ivanka is better’

**LALIT K. JHA WASHINGTON, AUG. 29**

Kamala Harris is “not competent” to be President, US President Donald Trump has said as he launched an attack on the Indian-origin senator's credentials for the top post.

Addressing his supporters at a Republican campaign rally in New Hampshire on Friday, Trump said he would support seeing a female president in the US but suggested that his daughter and senior White House adviser Ivanka Trump would be a better candidate for such a role. Harris, 55, was a presi-



Donald Trump

dential aspirant until last year before she dropped out of the race because of lack of popular support. Harris returned to political limelight after Joe Biden, the Democratic Party's presidential candidate, picked her as his running mate in the November 3 election. Born to a Jamaican father and an Indian mother, Harris is the first

Indian-American and first Black woman to be picked by a major American political party for the top post. “You know I want to see the first woman President also, but I don't want to see a woman President get into that position the way she'd do it, and she's not competent,” Trump said. “She's not competent,” he said amidst applause from his supporters, a few of whom screamed Ivanka Trump, at an election rally on Friday.

“They're all saying, ‘we want Ivanka’. I don't blame you,” he said responding to his supporters. This was Mr Trump's first election rally after he

formally accepted the nomination of the Republican Party on Thursday for the presidential election.

Trump said Harris withdrew from the Democratic Party's presidential race before primary season kicked off as her popularity dropped down to single digit. “How about her? Sheer beauty? What a beauty though,” they pick a woman who starts off (her presidential campaign) sort of strong. She's one of the favourites. Within a period of a few months, she goes down, down 15, 12, 11, nine, eight, five, three, two,” he said. — PTI

## National Sports Awards go virtual



Archer Atanu Das (left) and athlete Dutee Chand (right) show their Arjuna Award 2020 certificates received from President Ram Nath Kovind virtually due to Covid-19 pandemic in Kolkata on Saturday. Dharmendra Tiwary (centre) shows his Dronacharya Award 2020 certificate for his contribution in the field of archery. India's sporting heroes were bestowed the annual national awards in an unparalleled online ceremony amid the Covid-19 pandemic. ■ Report on Page 8 — PTI

# India withdraws from ‘Kavkaz 2020’ as China part of it India pulls out of Russia war game

**PAWAN BALI NEW DELHI, AUG. 29**

India has withdrawn from multi-nation military exercise “Kavkaz 2020” in Russia next month as China was one of the participating countries.

India did not want to participate in a military exercise with China at a time when armies from the two countries are involved in a stand-off in Eastern Ladakh for the last three months. Pakistan is also participating in the event.

▶ INDIA DID not want to participate in a military exercise with China at a time when armies from the two countries are involved in a stand-off in Eastern Ladakh for the last three months. Pakistan is also participating in the event.

The exercise Kavkaz is being held in Astrakhan region of Southern Russia from 15-27 September 2020. The military exercise is part of a four year exercise cycle of the Russian Army and the name is based on the region where these exer-

cises are held. Kavkaz was last held in 2012 and 2016.

As per the earlier plan, India's participation in the exercise was to be a company level strength (180 troops from an infantry battalion plus elements of other arms) along with elements of IAF and observers from the Indian Navy. Some 13,000 troops will participate in the exercise. China is likely to participate with substantial numbers of naval surface combatants. The aim of the exercise is to provide real-time training to counter international terrorism in the Northern and Caucasus region. The

current exercise setting will involve both offensive and defensive operations against international terror organisations.

Meanwhile, defence ministry in a statement said that Russia and India are close and privileged strategic partners. At Russia's invitation, India has been participating in many international events. “However, in view of pandemic and consequent difficulties in exercise, including arrangements of logistics, India has decided not to send contingent this year to Kavkaz-2020. The same has been informed to the Russian side,” said defence ministry.

## Cong writes to Zuckerberg as report alleges FB-BJP link

**AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, AUG. 29**

The Congress has written to Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg, the second time in a fortnight, asking for details of the steps being taken to investigate allegations that the social media giant does not apply hate speech rules to posts by BJP members. “We urge you to let us know what steps your company is planning to take to investigate these matters... will also be pursuing legislative and judicial actions in India to ensure a foreign company cannot continue to cause social disharmony in our nation,” the letter said. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi too again launched a scathing attack over the BJP's alleged links with Facebook and WhatsApp.

Mr Gandhi said, “America's Time magazine exposes WhatsApp-BJP nexus: Used by 40 Cr Indians, WhatsApp also wants to be used for making payments for which Modi Govt's approval is needed. Thus, BJP has a hold over WhatsApp.”

The article in Time magazine talks of how Facebook has failed to check hate speech, including some comments by BJP leaders.

The BJP took a swipe at the Opposition party, saying any organisation that does not work to its liking is accused of acting under BJP-RSS pressure.



Yoshihide Suga

to run, the 71-year-old Suga has said he doesn't want the job. But such comments have been called into question by an aggressive media push in recent days that put him squarely in the public eye. “They are really going to try to get Suga to replace Abe and continue the Abe government without Abe,” said Sophia University professor Koichi Nakano.

— Reuters

■ More on Page 6

# Abe loyalist Suga may be next Japanese PM

**Tokyo, Aug. 29:** Yoshihide Suga, a long-time lieutenant of Japan's Shinzo Abe, has emerged as a strong contender to succeed him as Prime Minister, an outcome that would extend the fiscal and monetary stimulus that defined Abe's nearly eight years in office. Mr Abe said on Friday he was stepping down due to a worsening of a chronic illness, setting the stage for a leadership election within the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). While some other would-be successors have declared their intention



## IN BRIEF

## Man and mother held in dowry death case

**Noida:** The husband and the mother-in-law of a woman, who was found dead at her in-laws' home in Greater Noida, have been arrested in an alleged dowry death case, police said Saturday. The arrests were made on Friday evening from Shadipur Chhidoli village after police registered an FIR on the basis of a complaint from the deceased woman's parents, they said. One of the family members had told police that she had woken up around 3 am to drink water when she found Musaida, 22, unusually lying on a cot in the terrace. Later, the family realised she was dead and the matter was reported to police at 6.00 am, according to officials. The local Badalpur police station officials said the death appeared to be mysterious and suggested some foul play as the body bore injury marks too. "Based on the complaint from the family of the deceased, Musaida's husband Firoz, 24, and his mother Anno were arrested from their house on Friday," a police spokesperson said.

## Man hit by car, dragged on bonnet

**New Delhi:** A motorcyclist was injured after being hit by a car and dragged on its bonnet in Delhi's Vikaspuri area, police said on Friday. The victim Chetan, a resident of Pankha Road, Uttam Nagar, was riding his motorcycle on Thursday night when he was hit by the car on Najafgarh Road, DCP (West) Deepak Purohit said. He along with the pillion rider confronted the car driver and the passenger identified as Durgesh Tiwari (31) and Karan Sethi (44), however, they refused to step out. Chetan then stood in front of the car in a bid to block its way and force the driver to come out, Purohit said. However, the driver pressed the accelerator and hit Chetan who fell on the bonnet and grabbed the wipers while the vehicle started moving towards Janakpuri. Few minutes later, he lost grip, fell down and got stuck under the car but the driver refused to stop the vehicle and dragged him for around 150 metres even as Chetan cried for help.

## 19 hurt at Muharram procession in J&amp;K

■ **Continued from Page 1**  
groups of people at a couple of places after they violated restrictions in force in parts of Srinagar in view of the Covid-19 and tried to take out tazia processions, ignoring the appeals of the authorities to the contrary.

On Friday, the police detained dozens of Shia mourners to foil their repeated attempts to take out a tazia procession through the streets of uptown Srinagar. The authorities had on Friday dawn imposed restrictions under Section 144 CrPC on areas falling under eight police stations - Batamalo, Shaheed Gunj, Karan Nagar, Maisuma, Kothi Bagh, Shergari, Krala Khud and Ram Munshi Bagh to hold back tazia processions.

Kashmir's commissioner, Pandurang K. Pole, on Thursday night announced a complete ban on holding of such rallies in view of the spike in Covid-19 deaths and positive cases in the Valley and urged the heads of religious organisations to use their influence and make people aware of the importance of following Covid related SOPs including social distancing protocol and use of face masks while commemorating martyrdom of Imam Hussain.

Several Shia religious organisations and leaders had earlier announced that no mass rallies, processions or congregations would be held this year to commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Hussain in view of Covid and appealed to the devotees to follow SOPs strictly while even holding restricted majalis (mourning assemblies) in their respective areas. However, such appeals were ignored in some areas including the central town of Budgam where the police used force to break up a large mourning procession on Wednesday. The authorities said that curfew-like restrictions being enforced in parts of Srinagar and some other towns including Budgam will be extended to more areas from Saturday midnight to hold back the tazia and zuljinah procession on Sunday, the 10th day of Muharram. An official ban remains in force on organising mourning rallies and processions along select traditional routes on the 8th and 10th day of Muharram, the first month of Islamic calendar, mainly in Srinagar ever since the separatist campaign became violent way back in 1989.

■ Paramilitary forces has proposed to check Aarogya Setu mobile app of commuters at stations  
Multiple detectors, restricted entry to Metro: CISF

**New Delhi, Aug. 29:** Contactless frisking of passengers, who will go through multiple door-sized metal detectors, checking them for fever or flu-like symptoms and restricted entry into stations are among a slew of measures proposed by the CISF for the Delhi Metro, which may be re-opened in September after being shut for five months due to the Covid pandemic.

The paramilitary force that guards the metro network in the national capital region has prepared a fresh "business continuity plan" that will be implemented in "consultation" with the urban development ministry and the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC).

Encouraging commuters to download the Aarogya Setu mobile app and intensifying electronic and manual surveillance on all activities in metro premises have also been suggested by the force, besides several measures for maintaining social distancing.

The plan has been prepared to ensure that the health and security of metro staff and the passengers are not compromised and to enable a sound counter-terrorist cover during the Covid times in the over 230 stations of the rapid rail transport system often called the "lifeline" of Delhi-NCR.

The government is likely to allow the resumption of metro train services in the "Unlock 4" phase beginning September 1 and the Union home ministry is expected to issue the new guidelines any day now.



Construction workers stand in a queue for Covid test in New Delhi on Saturday. — PTI

As per the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) plan accessed by PTI, the force has proposed that the Aarogya Setu mobile app should be "checked" of all commuters entering the station.

A senior official said while the force has not stressed that the app should be mandatory, but passengers can be encouraged to download it for a hassle-free journey.

"Those who do not have the app due to any reason will also be allowed to use the metro," he said.

The app helps to ascertain the Covid health status of an individual, including if the person has been exposed to any infected person. — PTI

## 35% rise in demand for hospital beds in Delhi since July-end

**New Delhi, Aug. 29:** The rise in the number of Covid cases in the national capital has led to a 35 per cent increase in the demand for beds in hospitals in the city, according to government data.

On July 30, the occupancy of beds reserved for coronavirus patients was 18 per cent, with only 2,958 out of 16,038 beds being occupied.

It was 23.02 per cent on August 10 and 23.40 per cent on August 11.

It increased to 28 per cent on Saturday, with 4,004 out of 14,135 beds occupied, according to

data shared by the hospitals on Delhi Corona app.

Out of 1,229 Covid ICU beds with ventilator support, 473 (38 percent) were occupied. The occupancy was 33 per cent on July 30.

Delhi has recorded an increase in the number of new cases over the last few days, which experts attribute to the easing of lockdown curbs, complacency among people and return of migrants workers from neighboring states. The number of new cases hovered around 1,000 in the beginning of August - 1,118 on August 1 and 961 on August 2. — PTI

## SC verdict tomorrow in Prashant Bhushan case

PARMOD KUMAR  
NEW DELHI, AUG. 29

The Supreme Court will pronounce on Monday (August 31) judgment on the sentencing of lawyer Prashant Bhushan in a suo motu contempt case for his two tweets which the court had held lowered its dignity and authority and tended to destabilize it.

The top court bench comprising Justice Arun Mishra, Justice B.R.Gavai and Justice Krishna Murari had reserved the judgment on August 25 after a hearing in the wake of Bhushan refusing to tender an "unconditional apology" as was sought by the court by its August 20, 2020, order.

The sentence that will be given to Bhushan, however, will not come into effect immediately as the court had in the August 20 hearing "assured" that any sentence that will be pronounced on Bhushan will come into force only after his plea seeking the reconsideration (review) of August 14 judgment holding him guilty of criminal contempt for his two tweets is decided.

Bhushan has yet to file a review petition, as per Supreme Court rules he had 30 days time starting from August 14 to file the same.

which have thriving markets for the yellow metal, the probe agency said.

"The smuggling syndicate sourced and recruited poor and needy individuals from various parts of the country, to act as carriers of smuggled gold, by luring them with the prospect of quick and easy money

The seized gold bars are of 99.9 per cent purity and collectively weigh 83.621 kg.

"The market value of the recovered contraband is close to ₹43 crore," the statement said.

These eight carriers have been arrested and remanded to judicial custody, it added. — PTI

## DRI seizes gold worth ₹43 crore at rly station

**New Delhi, Aug. 29:** In a major catch, the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) has seized gold worth nearly ₹43 crore, smuggled into India from Myanmar, from eight men arrested at New Delhi railway station, officials said on Saturday.

As many as 504 gold bars, weighing 83.6 kg, have been recovered from the accused who hail from Sangli district in Maharashtra, they said.

In a statement issued on Saturday, the DRI said eight people were intercepted after their arrival at New Delhi railway station by Dibrugarh-New Delhi Rajdhani Express on Friday.

The DRI officials seized 504 gold bars which were found to be concealed in specially tailored cloth vests worn by these eight passengers, it said.

"The carriers of the smuggled gold were found to be travelling on fake identity (Aadhar card)," the statement said.

The intelligence inputs indicate that the recovered gold bars carrying foreign markings, had been smuggled into India from Myanmar through the international land border at Moreh in Manipur and the smuggling syndicate operating from Guwahati was attempting to dispose of the contraband in Delhi, Kolkata and Mumbai

■ **THE DRI officials seized 504 gold bars which were found to be concealed in specially tailored cloth vests worn by these eight passengers**

■ **THE SMUGGLING syndicate sourced and recruited poor and needy individuals from various parts of the country, to act as carriers of smuggled gold, by luring them with the prospect of quick and easy money**



A traffic police constable inspects a caved-in portion of a road after heavy rains at Shrimant Madhavrao Scindia Marg in New Delhi on Saturday. — PTI

## Court grants bail to man in 2 cases, says nothing on record against him

**New Delhi, Aug. 29:** A court here on Saturday granted bail to a man in two separate cases related to northeast Delhi violence, saying no public witnesses or CCTV footage have come on record to show that he was involved in rioting and chanting slogans against other community.

Chief metropolitan magistrate Purushottam Pathak granted bail to Sunil Sharma in two cases of rioting in Bhajanpura area on furnishing a bail bond of ₹20,000 and a surety of like amount in each case. "In the present case, nothing has come on record such as any public witness, CCTV footage or

any video recording to show the presence of applicant/accused (Sharma) on the spot and that he was involved in rioting and chanting slogans against other community. No recovery has been effected from him," the court said in its similar order passed in the two cases.

The court directed Sharma to join the investigation and not to tamper with evidence or influence any witness in any manner in the cases.

It also said Sharma should maintain peace and harmony in the society and appear before the court on each and every date of hearing to attend the proceedings. — PTI

During the hearing held through video conferencing, advocate Rajendra Singh Kasana, said Sharma, who was in custody since April, has been falsely implicated in the cases.

Kasana further claimed that Sharma has not been named in the FIR and nothing has been recovered from him.

Special Public Prosecutor Rajiv Krishan Sharma, appearing for the state, opposed the bail plea, saying Sharma, while a member of unlawful assembly, allegedly indulged in looting, arsoning, damaging public and private properties. — PTI

decided to hire a private consultant, following government rules," the officer said.

Later, a tender was floated and the consultant was asked to shortlist people for an interview. "100 people were shortlisted after their resumes were scanned from online job portals; they appeared for an online interview with senior officers of the Special Branch. They were asked about their perception of the Delhi Police, their point of view over the police action during the riots, and what they would do if they got the job," an officer said.

Out of the 100, 15-17 people were shortlisted. Two of them, who will be given the designation of "perception manager", will lead the team, said police.

"They were recently called to the police HQ, where the police chief met them and conveyed that the force needs a strong presence on all social media platforms to counter misleading information by anti-social elements. Apart from working under the special branch, they have been asked to coordinate with the Delhi Police spokesperson," the officer added. — Agencies

## Delhi records Aug's highest single-day spike of 1,840 cases

Total +ve cases 1,71,366, 15 deaths in 24 hrs

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, AUG. 29

With 1,954 new cases total Covid patients count cross 1.7 lakh in the national capital. While the death toll from the disease rose to 4,404, in the last 24 hours, 15 deaths were recorded in the city. As cases continue to rise regularly for the last 10 days in the national capital, health experts advised that citizens must cooperate with the government's order and follow every possible precautionary measure while going out in public.

■ **THE NUMBER of containment zones stands at 803. Positivity rate also dropped from earlier above 90% to 89.23**

■ **AS CASES continue to rise regularly for the last 10 days in the national capital, health experts advised that citizens must cooperate with the government's order and follow every possible precautionary measure while going out in public**

■ **THE NUMBER of containment zones stands at 803. Positivity rate also dropped from earlier above 90% to 89.23**

lines on their own. But it is unfortunate to see people not wearing masks, not maintaining social distancing etc. Coming back to daily routine life is the need of the hour but the risk is still not over," said Dr Mutta.

Health experts pointed out that some areas witnessed low rates by following precautionary measures with discipline, if people follow them again with discipline we will surely see positive change.

Pulmonary consultant, Dharamshila Narayana Superspecialty Hospital, Dr Navneet Sood said, "It is disappointing to see that a section of society is not practising social distancing and other safety measures in public. It is not that difficult to understand that this "unlock" is for the country's economic growth. It doesn't mean that risk is over and we can move in public places freely. We should not forget that asymptomatic infection can be far more dangerous as the person may not face any pain but he or she is still a carrier of the virus and one cannot judge who may be infected or not."

They highlighted that fighting for Covid free country is not possible without precautionary practices.

## India's Covid-19 recovery go past 26 lakh, death rate drops

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, AUG. 29

India on Saturday once again recorded the highest fresh cases in a single day after 76,472 new patients were detected with the novel coronavirus infection. With this spike, India's overall Covid tally moved closer to 35 lakh as per COVID19India.org figures. It was 34.64 lakh as per union health ministry data till Saturday morning.

The death toll due to the disease has now reached 62,550 after 1,021 people succumbed to the virus in the last 24 hours though as per COVID19India.org the overall death toll was close to 63,000 by evening. However, the health ministry said the Covid case fatality rate has dropped to 1.81 per cent.

The number of recoveries has increased substantially with about 26.5 lakh people getting discharged from medical caretaking the recovery rate to 76.47 per cent. In the last 24 hours, 65,050 persons were declared fit. However, there are still 7.52 lakh active cases in the country currently which account for 21.72 per cent of the total case-load.

Health ministry officials said that a significant feature of India's management of COVID-19 cases is the growing rate of recovered patients. "The Recovery Rate of India is following a continuous upward incline whereas the Case Fatality Rate is constantly declining," they said.

According to officials, the global comparison depicts that India has one of the lowest cases per million (2424) and deaths per million (44) compared to the global average of 3161 and 107.2, respectively. Eight states — Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Odisha and Telangana — contribute to around 73% of the active case-load, as of today. Moreover, seven states — Maharashtra, Delhi, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal — account for 81% of the total deaths.



## SHORT TAKES

## Sakshi Maharaj put in 14-day isolation

**Giridih (Jharkhand):** BJP MP Sakshi Maharaj was forcibly home quarantined here on Saturday for 14-day for violating Covid-19 norms, a senior district official said. The MP from Uttar Pradesh had come to Giridih, over 200 km from Ranchi, to take part in a programme from Unnao via Dhanbad. Maharaj, who was returning to Dhanbad by road to take a train to Delhi, was intercepted by the district administration near Pirtand police station and sent on quarantine at Shanti Bhawan ashram, where he had gone to take part in a programme, Deputy Commissioner Rahul Kumar Sinha said. The action been taken in accordance with a state government order of 14 days quarantine for people coming from outside, the DC said. "He had not informed the state government about his visit and therefore we have put him in quarantine for 14 days," Mr Sinha said. — PTI

## Madras HC to start physical hearing

**Chennai:** The Madras high court on Saturday decided to resume physical hearing of cases from September 7 "in order to meet the growing demand" for physical court hearing. The court will also continue with the virtual hearing and will have staggered physical hearings to avoid overcrowding in the courts, a notification from the Madras high court registrar general said. "In order to meet the growing demand of physical court hearing and also keeping view the precautions that are required to be observed for avoiding any untoward happening, Hon'ble Administrative Committee on serious consideration has decided to open physical court hearing partially," it said. The Committee has decided to open physical hearing partially with six division benches at the Principal seat here and two at Madurai. — PTI

## Woman buries hubby under bedroom, held

**Agartala:** A woman allegedly killed her husband and buried him in their house in Bhaktikumarpara in Dhalai district of Tripura, police said on Saturday. The accused, 21-year-old Bharati buried Sanjit Reang (30) under the mud floor of their bedroom and fled to a nearby village on Thursday night, they said. Acting on a tip off, police searched the house and recovered the body of the deceased, and arrested the woman from the village. The couple often got into quarrels, a police officer said. Superintendent of Police, Dhalai district, Kishore Debbarma said an FIR was registered in this connection and investigation is underway. During routine procedure, the accused tested positive for Covid-19. — PTI

## Bihar: Cong MLA Ramdeo Rai dies

**Patna/Begusarai:** Veteran Congress leader, multiple term Bihar MLA and former Lok Sabha member Ramdeo Rai, who had caused ripples in the 1980s when he defeated socialist heavyweight Karpoori Thakur in an electoral contest, died here on Saturday. The 81-year-old sitting MLA from Bachhwara in Begusarai district, breathed his last at a private hospital in Patna, where he had been admitted for a few months and suffered a cardiac arrest in the morning, party sources said. Condoling his demise, chief minister Nitish Kumar remembered Rai as a "sweet natured, soft-spoken and simple" political leader whose death felt to him like "personal loss". Rai had registered his maiden electoral victory in the 1972 Assembly polls. — PTI

## 3 minors killed in UP house collapse

**Fatehpur (UP):** Three children were killed and six others injured here on Saturday after the roof of their thatched house collapsed due to rains, police said. The incident occurred at around 4.30 pm in Ratva Khara village. Sunil Pal's three children, Shishupal (2), Sabhajeet (5) and Gudhika (15), died on the spot, while six other family members were injured, SHO of the Bindki police station Satyendra Singh said. Police pulled out the injured from the debris with the help of villagers. — PTI

## ■ 'Tunnel had sandbags with markings of Karachi and Shakargarh' J&amp;K tunnel 'handiwork of Pak': BSF

**Jammu, Aug. 29:** A top BSF official said on Saturday that a major underground tunnel that was found in Samba, originating from Pakistan, was constructed with the knowledge and "hand" of the neighbouring nation.

The remarks of BSF Inspector General (Jammu frontier) N.S. Jamwal came after the Border Security Force (BSF) detected a tunnel just beneath the Indo-Pak international border fence in Galar area of Samba.

He lauded the force personnel for their alertness in detecting the tunnel and said, "We were getting information that a tunnel was dug out from the Pakistan side in Samba. We were working on the information when one of our teams managed to locate it on Friday evening."

Mr Jamwal, who rushed to inspect the tunnel on Saturday morning, told reporters that it was dug out from Pakistan side and was over 150 metres inside the Indian territory.

The tunnel's opening was properly reinforced with sandbags carrying markings of "Karachi and



BSF personnel stand near the mouth of a hidden tunnel after it was found along the India-Pakistan border in Jammu and Kashmir's Samba region on Saturday. — PTI

Shakargarh", clearly indicating that it was dug out from Pakistan side and ended here, he said.

The IG said the preliminary investigation revealed that it was a freshly dug tunnel.

"There is a hand and knowledge of Pakistan establishment in such

kind of construction," Mr Jamwal said.

Meanwhile, in a statement, the BSF said the tunnel was unearthed in a special anti-tunnelling drive which was launched all along the IB in Jammu region in view of the prevailing security scenario in the recent times. — PTI

## Farooq to garner support for return of J&amp;K Art 370

Abdullah's party to push its demand 'tooth and nail'

YUSUF JAMEEL  
SRINAGAR, AUG. 29

National Conference (NC)'s high-power political affairs committee met here on Friday to discuss the overall political situation prevailing in Jammu and Kashmir and chalk out strategy towards seeking restoration of its special status and statehood.

The meeting, the first held since the Centre abrogated Article 370 and bifurcated J&K into two Union Territories (UTs) in August last year, authorised its president and former chief minister Farooq Abdullah to garner support for "Gupkar Declaration" beyond its signatories.

On August 4, 2019, the leaders of J&K's regional parties, including NC and People's Democratic Party (PDP) and their allies in Congress and CPIM, had met at Mr Abdullah's residence along Srinagar's Gupkar Road and signed a joint statement named as "Gupkar Declaration" through which they vowed to protect the spe-



National Conference president Farooq Abdullah and party vice-president Omar Abdullah attend the party's first-ever meeting after abrogation of Article 370 at the party headquarters Nawa-e-Subha in Srinagar on Saturday. — PTI

cial status, identity and autonomy of J&K and fight tooth and nail attempts to split it up.

Last week, the leaders of NC, PDP, Peoples Conference, Awami National Conference, CPIM and Congress issued a joint statement here saying that they are "wholly bound" by the "Gupkar Declaration" and "will unwaveringly adhere to it."

The NC said on Saturday that its political affairs

committee which met at the party headquarters here with Mr Abdullah in chair held a threadbare discussion on "unilateral, undemocratic and unconstitutional measures undertaken by Government of India and its impact on the ground level in J&K". While all its members from the Valley attended the meeting, those from Jammu region and Kargil participated in it via a video link, a party spokesman said.

## ■ 15 days will focus on sanitisation, classes to begin Sept. 15 Assam schools to re-open September 1

MANOJ ANAND  
GUWAHATI, AUG. 29

A day after doling out appointment letters to 5,319 teachers for primary and upper primary schools, Assam education minister Himanta Biswa Sarma here on Saturday announced that all schools across the state will re-open from September 1. However, for the first 15 days, the teachers will focus on sanitisation of their respective school premises and informal classes will start from September 15. Moreover,

the government will also arrange free masks for the students.

Informing that teachers who have tested negative in mandatory Covid-19 tests will start coming to schools from September 1, Mr Sarma told reporters that they have decided to carry out massive sanitisation of the school premises. "We have also decided to allot a fund to the schools for sanitisation of schools," said the minister adding that education department is also going to release Standard Operating Procedure

(SOP) that will have to be followed by all the government schools.

The minister said, "From September 15 onwards, the students of primary schools and upper primary schools will also be given mid-day meals and one week's question paper and study material. Next week, their papers will be checked in front of them."

He however clarified that informal classes would start from September 15 but in case of outbreak of Covid-19, they will close the school

## Modi: Farming will be taught in schools

'Efforts on to introduce Agriculture in rural schools'

**New Delhi, Aug. 29:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday pitched for taking farm education to middle school level, saying necessary reforms have been made in this regard in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

"There is a need to take knowledge related to agriculture and its practical application to school level. Efforts are (on) to introduce the Agriculture subject at middle school level in villages," Modi said.

This will develop agriculture related understanding in students and enable them to give information about agriculture, its modern farming techniques and marketing, to their family members, he said, adding this will promote agro-entrepreneurship in the country.

"For this, many reforms have been made in the National Education Policy," Modi said in an address after the virtual inauguration of college and administration build-



There is a need to take knowledge related to agriculture and its practical application to school level. Efforts are (on) to introduce the Agriculture subject at middle school level in villages.

— Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

ings of Jhansi-based Rani Lakshmi Bai Central Agricultural University.

The NEP approved by the Union Cabinet last month replaces the 34-year-old National Policy on Education and is aimed at paving the way for transformational reforms in school and higher education systems to make India a global knowledge superpower.

Asserting that steady efforts are being made to connect farming with modern technology, the Prime Minister noted that research institutions and agricultural universities have a vital role to play.

Currently, there are three central agricultural universities in the country, compared to just one

university six years ago. Besides this, three more national institutions — IARI Jharkhand, IARI Assam and Mahatma Gandhi Institute for Integrated Farming in Motihari, Bihar — are being established.

He remarked that these institutions will not only give new opportunities to students, but will also help in increasing their capacity, in providing technology benefits to the local farmers.

Mr Modi further said in the last six years, the government has endeavoured to establish a link between research and farming, and to provide scientific advice to farmers, at the ground level in villages. — PTI

## Bundelkhand to get ₹10Kcr water projects

**New Delhi, Aug. 29:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said the government is committed to the development of drought-prone Bundelkhand region and around 500 projects worth over ₹10,000 crore have been sanctioned for improving water availability.

Observing that the benefit of water from three rivers, Ken, Betwa and Yamuna, was not reaching the Bundelkhand region, Mr Modi said the proposed Ken-Betwa river linking project has the potential to change the fortune of the area and the Centre is in discussion with both Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh on this issue.

He was addressing after the virtual inauguration of college and administration buildings of Jhansi-based Rani Lakshmi Bai Central Agricultural University.

"Both the Centre and the UP government are committed towards development of Bundelkhand region and restore its historic identity and past glory," Mr Modi said.

The Prime Minister men-

tioned that before the 2019 general polls, he had promised to improve water availability in the Bundelkhand region in the next five years and several initiatives have been taken in that regard.

"Due to their blessings, Har Ghar Jal Abhiyan (Tap water to every rural household) is working at a fast pace. Construction of water bodies and laying of pipelines in all districts are underway. The government has already sanctioned over ₹10,000 crore for 500 water projects for this purpose," he said. Of these, the work on projects worth nearly ₹3,000 crore has commenced in the last two months.

"When these projects get completed, lakhs of families in this region will directly benefit," he said. — PTI

## PM: Modern tech helped stop locusts

**New Delhi, Aug. 29:** India has controlled the spread of crop-threatening migratory pest desert locusts by using advanced technologies, including drones, and ensured there was not much crop damage, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Saturday.

In his address after the virtual inauguration of college and administration buildings of Jhansi-based Rani Lakshmi Bai Central Agricultural University, the prime minister stressed on the need to promote greater use of latest technologies in the farm sector.

More than 10 states, including Uttar Pradesh, faced locust problem in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, he said adding that the Bundelkhand region faced the locust attack after 30 years.

Sharing how modern technologies are helpful in addressing the challenges faced by the farm sector, Mr Modi said. — PTI

## Nadda meet MPs from Bihar, asks them to be active

MPs asked to visit at least 60 panchayats

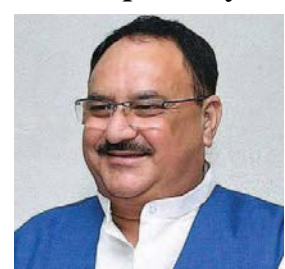
AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, AUG. 29

BJP president J.P. Nadda on Saturday met party MPs from both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha from Bihar at the party headquarters to review the party's preparedness for the coming crucial assembly polls in the state.

The BJP, which is a junior coalition partner in the state government led by chief minister Nitish Kumar JD(U), has asked its MPs to visit at least 60 panchayats, two each day, not in their own constituencies to meet people and also work to ensure the victory of NDA candidates, whether it is of their own party or alliance partners — JD(U) and LJP.

Mr Nadda had recently announced that the NDA will go to polls under the leadership of Nitish Kumar and exuded confidence that the ruling coalition will retain power. Bihar will be the first state that will go to polls in October-November amid global pandemic Covid-19.

While Mr Nadda is likely to visit the state in the second week of next month, former Maharashtra chief minister Devendra Fadnis, who is likely to get a key role in the election committee, is expected to visit Patna on September 6,



J.P. Nadda

when the BJP could officially start the seat sharing talks with allies.

During the meeting, BJP MPs were asked to address at least one virtual rally at Shakti Kendras (booths) and reach out to as many prominent people in a every district, highlighting central government and state government's achievements. BJP MPs have also been asked to observe Prime Minister Narendra Modi birthday on September 17 as 'Seva Divas' and the birth anniversary of party ideologue Deen Dayal Upadhyaya next month in a big way. For the Prime Minister's monthly radio programme Mann Ki Baat in September, BJP leaders have been asked to make sure that arrangements are made at every booth in the state for the karyakartas and locals, while keeping in mind the social distancing norms and guidelines against Covid-19.



Women play soccer at Brigade Parade Ground during unlock 3.0, in Kolkata on Saturday. — PTI



## SHORT TAKES

**'Run Kolkata Metro, local train services'**

**Kolkata:** The West Bengal government has written a letter to the Railway Board, stating that Metro and local train services can be resumed in a limited manner in the state but with all health safety protocols. The government also requested the board to put in place the required logistics for smooth operations of the services. In a letter to the Railway Board chairman, state home secretary Alapan Bandyopadhyay said: "The state government is of the view that Metro and local train services can be resumed in Bengal in a limited manner maintaining the norms of physical distancing and health hygiene protocols." Before resumption of the services, the required modalities and logistics to ensure smooth operation may be worked out in consultation with the state government, the letter, sent to the board on Friday, said.

— PTI

**Army officer duped of ₹1.41cr online**

**Jammu:** An Army officer here was duped of ₹1.41 crore by five people posing as Union finance ministry officials, the crime branch said on Saturday. The five-member gang of cyber fraudsters lured the officer, Lt Col. Sardar Singh Smotra of Gandhi Nagar area of Jammu, into investing in a Canadian-based fund company with assured return of ₹10 crore at the time of maturity 16 years later, it said. A case was registered against the fraudsters after an inquiry into the complaint of the officer prima facie established that he was duped of the huge amount of money, it said in a statement here. The accused have been identified as Vivek Kumar, Shyam Pal and Pushpendar, all residents of Uttar Pradesh, and Jagdish Chander Sharma and Jaikant Kumar, both of Delhi. — PTI

**ED raids Chinese betting apps firms**

**New Delhi:** The Enforcement Directorate has frozen four HSBC Bank accounts containing ₹46.96 crore after it raided multiple premises of companies involved in running online Chinese betting apps, according to an official statement. It said the searches were carried out at 15 locations in Delhi, Gurgaon, Mumbai and Pune on Friday under various sections of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). "Searches were conducted on the registered offices of the companies, their directors and chartered accountants involved in illegally running online betting apps from websites which are hosted from outside India," the federal probe agency said in the statement on Saturday. — PTI

**Tusker electrocuted at MP reserve forest**

**Umaria, MP:** A female elephant died of electrocution in Panpadha sanctuary of Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve (BTR) in Madhya Pradesh on Saturday, an official said. The incident took place in the early hours of the day when the tusker came in contact with a high-voltage electricity line passing through Gangital beat, forest sub-divisional officer (SDO) Anil Kumar Shukla said. The pachyderm was part of a herd that was passing by the banks of a pond when the incident occurred, he said. Power lines are at a low height here and the power company has already been intimated about this, he added. The elephant's remains were cremated as per norms. — PTI

**Baby girl sold by grandma for ₹1.1L**

**Karimnagar, Telangana:** A woman in Karimnagar district of Telangana allegedly sold her infant granddaughter for ₹1.10 lakh, police said on Saturday. According to police, the infant's father got married about three years ago. He was living in Hyderabad with his wife. The man's wife gave birth to a baby girl one month ago and she was staying at her mother's place at Veenavanka in the district, they said. After coming to know about the matter, the infant's father complained to the state government's child welfare committee on Friday. Efforts were on to arrest the grandmother and the alleged purchaser, police added.

— PTI

# '90% applicants want to take NEET, JEE test'

**Mamata 'ruining' future of aspiring students: BJP neta**

**Siliguri/Kolkata, Aug. 29:** Senior BJP leader Kailash Vijayvargiya on Saturday claimed that 90 per cent of the applicants from West Bengal are willing to sit for the NEET and the JEE examinations and accused Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee of "ruining" their future.

Banerjee has demanded that the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) and the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) be postponed due to the COVID-19 situation.

"Even though other non-BJP ruled states are demanding the deferment of the exams, they have also made necessary arrangements for conducting them."

"The West Bengal government, however, has not made any such arrangement and is opposing the conduct of the examinations just for the sake of it. It is playing with the future of the students," Vijayvargiya, the BJP's national general secretary, told reporters at Bagdogra airport near Siliguri.

Vijayvargiya also

► **THE WEST** Bengal govt is playing with the future of the students, Kailash Vijayvargiya, the BJP's national general secretary, told reporters at Bagdogra airport near Siliguri.

► **Bengal education minister Partha Chatterjee** launched a fresh salvo against his Central counterpart Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank', tweeting, "Amid this global pandemic, @DrRPNishank can you guarantee safety of nearly 30 lakh students who have registered for JEE & NEET exams?"

alleged that the chief minister was leading the state to the path of political violence ahead of the 2021 Assembly elections.

His allegation came after Banerjee, also the Trinamul Congress supreme, gave a "do or die" call against the BJP-led government at the Centre, vowing to give a "taste of freedom" to the entire country by defeating the saffron party's "political

epidemic" in the 2021 Assembly polls in West Bengal.

She had made the statement while addressing a virtual rally of the TMC Chhatra Parishad, the students' wing of the ruling party in West Bengal, in Kolkata on Thursday.

"People of West Bengal believe in democracy, while Mamata Banerjee believes in violence. If we come to power, political violence will end," Vijayvargiya, the saffron party's central observer for the state, said.

Meanwhile, West Bengal education minister Partha Chatterjee launched a fresh salvo against his Central counterpart Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank', tweeting, "Amid this global pandemic, @DrRPNishank can you guarantee safety of nearly 30 lakh students who have registered for JEE & NEET exams?"

"With the transport system still not fully operational, why do you want to jeopardise their future so desperately? Immediately postpone the exams!" he demanded.

— PTI



Family members of Army martyr Prashant Sharma mourn his death at their residence in Muzaffarnagar of Uttar Pradesh on Saturday. Prashant was killed in an encounter with militants in Pulwama late Friday night.

— PTI

## ■ Narmada flows 9 ft above danger level Army called in to rescue people in flood-hit MP dist

**RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY**  
BHOPAL, AUG. 29

Army has been called in to rescue people in the marooned areas in Madhya Pradesh's Hosangabad district following flash floods in Narmada caused by heavy downpour in the region in the last 24 hours. The river was flowing 9 ft above its danger level in the district. "Army has been called in to evacuate people in marooned areas in the district. Besides, National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) teams have already been pressed into service to rescue the people in flood-hit areas", Hosangabad divisional commissioner Rajnish Srivastav said.

Chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan made an aerial survey of Hosangabad to assess the flood situation in the area. Road communications at several places in the state have been cut off due to flash floods in various rivers in the state triggered by torrential rains

## Man perched atop tree for 24 hrs in marooned island airlifted by chopper

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
BHOPAL, AUG. 29

A man perched atop a tree for nearly 24 hours in a marooned island in a Madhya Pradesh district was on Saturday rescued by a helicopter. Madhu Kahar (31), resident of Belkhada village in Chhindwara district, had on Friday morning gone for fishing along with his friends to the nearby island formed by Pench river.

The island was completely submerged when water from Machgaon dam was released, leaving him and his friends

stranded there. While his friends swam to safety, he climbed a tree in the marooned island to prevent him from being washed away by the flood water.

A team of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) team rushed to the area after receiving reports on the plight of the man. The NDRF team however could not approach him due to high current of water in the area. Later, he was airlifted by a chopper", the state revenue control room here said quoting reports from Chhindwara district collector's office.

in the last 36 hours.

Road communications between Bhopal and Sagar and Narasinghpur and Chhindwara have been cut off as flooded Narmada breached bridges and national highways at several places in the region. Red alert has been issued

for four districts and orange alert has been issued for 11 other districts in the state by India Meteorological Department (IMD) which predicted heavy to very heavy rainfall in these districts in the coming 48 hours.

## KPCC chief regrets his comments on Tharoor

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
T'PURAM, AUG. 29

Congress chief whip in Lok Sabha and working president of Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee Mr Kodikkunnil Suresh has expressed regret over his "guest artiste" jibe against Shashi Tharoor.

Mr Suresh said his words were not meant for hurting or belittling Tharoor and he had only expressed his annoyance against the letter written by 23 leaders to Sonia Gandhi on the organization's revamp. The Congress MP from Mavelikkara who is also one of the senior most dalit leaders in Congress, expressed regret after facing widespread criticism in social media.

"If he feels hurt by my statements, I regret keep



K. Suresh

ing the party interest above everything else but at the same time strongly differing with the stand taken by him on various issues," Mr Suresh added. A section of Youth Congress leaders had also come out in support of Mr Tharoor.

In a Facebook post, Mr Suresh said the crux of the criticism against Tharoor was related to his views against Congress party's well stated positions. "We have differences over the manner in which he takes stand on various issues without discussing in party fora. But the criticism should not be construed as personal differences because these are in the realm of political debates," he said.

## Jal shakti ministry wants direct control of Swachh Bharat fund

**ANIMESH SINGH**  
NEW DELHI, AUG. 29

Six years after the Swachh Bharat Kosh (SBK) was set up by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi in September 2014 to achieve the target of a "clean India" by October 2019, the Jal Shakti ministry now wants direct administration of the cleanliness fund, and has sought Union Cabinet's nod for the purpose.

When Mr Modi had announced the launch of Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) during his first Independence Day speech on August 15, 2014, the establishment of SBK was approved by the Union Cabinet on September 4, 2014. The fund was set up to attract contributions from corporate social responsibility (CSR) capital of companies as well as philanthropists to achieve the aforementioned objective. The Centre even offers

► **THE JAL** Shakti ministry last month moved a cabinet note for seeking to shift the administrative control of SBK under its jurisdiction, and comments from all the concerned departments have been invited

tax rebate to contributors to SBK. However its administration in the form of a secretariat was handed over to the Department of Expenditure under the Finance Ministry.

Though the SBK was formed to release funds to states for undertaking works related to drinking water and sanitation, the finance ministry's nod is needed for releasing funds from SBK.

While states' proposals are invited by the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation of the Union Jal Shakti Ministry, it has to seek

Finance Ministry's approval for getting the state government's projects cleared and for getting the funds from SBK released.

Now, according to sources privy to developments, the Jal Shakti Ministry wants direct control of the secretariat of the SBK on the grounds that this would simplify the process of getting the funds and projects proposed by states cleared in the larger interest of achieving the objective of Swachh Bharat. It says that once the control of the fund falls under it, the system of clearing projects and issuing funds for them would get simplified.

Subsequently the Jal Shakti ministry last month moved a cabinet note for seeking to shift the administrative control of SBK under its jurisdiction, and comments from all the concerned departments have been invited for the same.



BJP workers ring bell and clank utensils during a protest outside Datta temple at Karad in Maharashtra demanding reopening of all religious places in the state on Saturday.

— PTI

## ■ Seperate teams questioning suspects to weed out discrepancies

## CBI quizzes Rhea for 2nd day in row

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
MUMBAI, AUG. 29

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) grilled Rhea Chakraborty for the second day in a row on Saturday in connection with the Sushant Singh Rajput suicide.

Chakraborty is the prime accused in the case of abetment to suicide and cheating filed by Rajput's father. She was escorted to the DRDO guest house by a team of Mumbai police. The CBI also questioned others in connection with the suicide on Saturday.

The officials had grilled



Rhea Chakraborty

Chakraborty on Friday for more than 10 hours in connection with her monetary details and bank transactions. The CBI also questioned Rajput's flatmate Siddharth Pithani, cook Neeraj Singh, domestic help Keshav, manager Samuel Miranda and

accountant Rajat Mewati on Saturday.

Seperate teams are questioning the suspects to weed out discrepancies in the sequence of incidents. Rajput's father has accused Chakraborty of allegedly swindling at least ₹15 crore from the actor's bank account. The ED is hence studying the monetary transactions of the actor and Chakraborty.

"The family will also be questioned at a later stage on the same lines. Chakraborty may also be questioned again if needed," said an officer privy to the probe.

## Actress provided police protection

**Mumbai, Aug. 29:** Based on the request made by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), the Mumbai Police provided security to actress Rhea Chakraborty, who is accused of abetting the suicide of actor Sushant Singh Rajput, an official said on Saturday.

The CBI officials, who are in Mumbai to probe the actor's death case, made the request to the city police on Saturday, he said.

— PTI

**Indore, Aug. 29:** The Indian Institute of Technology here has introduced a unique course to impart mathematical and scientific knowledge from ancient texts in Sanskrit, an official said on Saturday.

Titled "Understanding Classical Scientific Texts of India in an Immersive Sanskrit Environment", the course was started to expose the present generation to ancient knowledge, the official from the institute said.

The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)-sponsored programme began on August 22 and will continue till October 2.

Over 750 candidates from all over the world

► **TITLED 'UNDERSTANDING** Classical Scientific Texts of India in an Immersive Sanskrit Environment', the course was started to expose the present generation to ancient knowledge.

► **The All India Council** for Technical Education (AICTE)-sponsored quality improvement programme began on August 22 and will continue till October 2.

were participating in the course, he added. "Ancient texts of India, originally composed in Sanskrit, have a rich heritage of mathematical and scientific knowledge and the present generation is unaware of this. We started this course to make them aware of this

ancient knowledge in Sanskrit itself," said professor Neelesh Kumar, officiating director of IIT, Indore.

The course will inspire participants to research, innovate, study and teach mathematics and science in Sanskrit, he said.

According to an IIT official, the course has been divided into two parts, under which participants will first be taught the nuances of Sanskrit to build their understanding of the language and in the next part, they will be taught classical mathematics in Sanskrit.

A qualifying examination will also be conducted to evaluate the participants involved in the second part of the course and successful candidates will be awarded a certificate, he added.

— PTI



## THE ASIAN AGE

30 AUGUST 2020



Shreya Sen-Handley

Off the beaten track

## The pandemic kissiquette

The new normal has brought with it new priorities, new rules of engagement, and a new or rarely-used-before vocabulary, which includes 'coronavirus' itself, wfh (bet you thought it a swear word at first — I did!), lockdown, flattening the curve, and social distancing. We all now know the two-metre rule, though we don't seem to be able to abide by it (what's with all the bargaining, People?). We've also been advised not to hold hands, hug or kiss, except in our bubbles. Since kissing from two metres away is a physical impossibility, this rule isn't hard to maintain except for politicians and cheats, viz. often one and the same. The rags are full of scandals about British politicians caught with their pants two metres down, in bubbles that don't appear to be theirs, because the lockdown rules have eluded them (though they made them themselves). Yet, for many of us the pandemic rules of engagement are no more baffling than those we had to contend with before, such as the etiquette around kissing, aka. Kissiquette. Having had two children, and perfectly aware of how they came about, it's not romantic or affectionate smooching that perplexes, but the formal, impersonal, performative variety, practised with relative strangers. For example —

1) How many kisses before one can disengage? Us plebs would have it at one, if at all. But if you're part of the fashionable set, it is at least two, on either cheek. This, I understand, is French (not to be mistaken for French kissing which doesn't involve cheeks at all). At other times, they will complete their pair of kisses and lean in for a third. The Swiss Kiss, I believe. This is fraught with danger. Will they or won't they? Will you offend them by stepping away too soon or unwittingly end up molesting them by moving in for an unwanted third? As a writer and a reclusive one, this is more stress than I can handle, especially at festival time, when the literary fraternity morph into showbiz luvvies, rushing into the arms of their peers, no matter how often they've stabbed each other in the back. At one such, I found myself in a sticky situation when having kissed me twice, the well-known author surfaced for air, but did not appear to have finished. Very much the novice, at both literary fests and social snogging, I became so unnerved by the ticking time bomb of our face-off, I found myself holding up my half-eaten biscuit and squeaking, "Want my cookie?" They did not, nor my company thereafter. Which settled that, but left me no wiser about how many kisses are too many. Or why not a wave, smile, or namaste instead?



**Bruderkuiss: Leonid Brezhnev and Erich Honecker kiss on the 30th-anniversary celebrations of the foundation of the German Democratic Republic, in 1979**

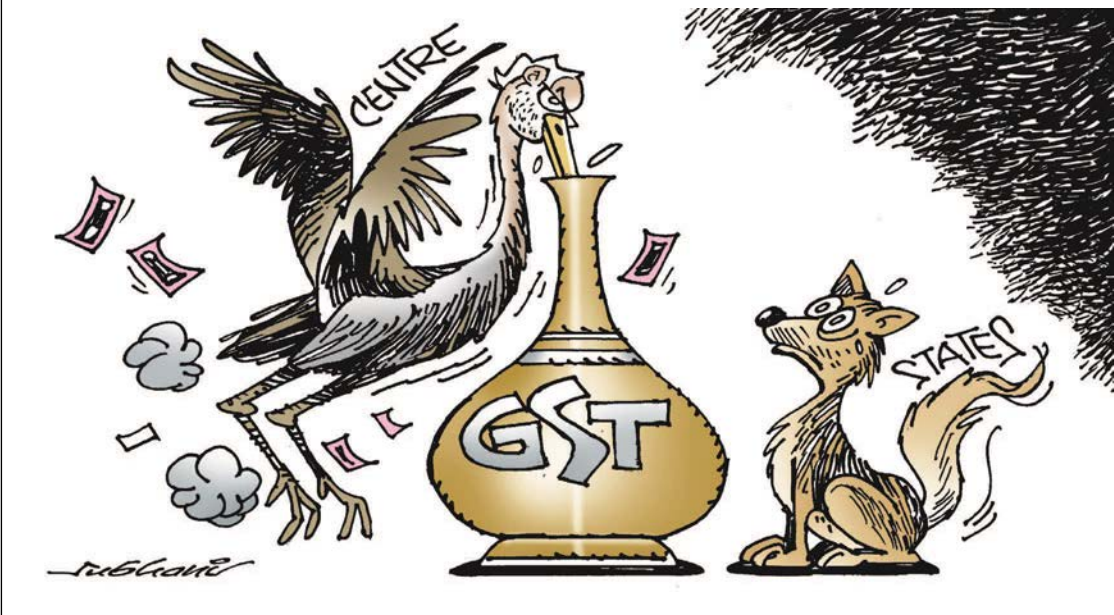
2) Whose idea was it to start blowing kisses on Zoom? In these long months of webinars, only one person has, thus far, ended a session by actually planting a smacker on the screen. But nearly everyone now blows kisses at it. The problem with virtual kisses is that they're so indiscriminate. You cannot blow kisses selectively. It has to be to everyone in the 'room' or not at all. Or go to extraordinary lengths to ensure you're left at the end with the right people, the kissable people. Or shut down screens, open up other screens, kiss the wrong people. Gaah. What if, outrageous though it might sound, a blown kiss for you is not a thing of air and inconsequence but an affirmation of actual affection? And blowing kisses to all and sundry smack of hypocrisy? If that's making heavy weather of something slight, doesn't the awkwardness of it all bother you? While the planted smacker may have been the only one, several people in their inelegant attempt to throw kisses from too close to the screen have thwacked it instead, jolting the session to a premature close. Of course friendly chats shouldn't stint on kisses blown, but strangely, younger, singler friends tell me that romantic assignations, much of which has moved online, have turned out terribly chaste. That there's no va-va-voom in Zoom, no Tinder kegs are lit, and blowing of any sort hardly happens. Through time and tide and many conversations, slow and steady wins the kiss. Like the amours conducted through epistles in the pages of an Austen classic.

3) But what would Jane have made of kissy emojis and the many curious crosses in texts? Oh I've learnt to mirror them exactly when writing back, in the hope no one guesses I haven't a clue what they mean. I get that they're kisses of course, and a convenient way of expressing affection in writing, because how many of us have time to compose sonnets? Yet, how many emoji hearts are too many? What colour should they be? If it's a kissy emoji, should it wink, for example, if your feelings are true? How about those pesky little exes, I mean x's; when are they in excess? I was led to believe a capital X denoted passion till the many messages from my 102-year-old great-aunt-in-law, each carrying giant X's, convinced me otherwise. Similarly, when is it "love", and when "luv"? Whatever it is, I must have got it wrong hundreds of times, and offended as many as I've scared!

I know I no longer need worry in this pandemic if in-the-flesh salutations involve one kiss or three (hurrah). And if biscuits are misplaced in such transactions, there's clearly more for me (double hurrah). Yet the question stands—how much performative love is too much (or too little), and why wasn't I sent the explanatory memo everyone else got? If you know the answers to these, especially the correct number of kisses, please drop them into an envelope and send to The Editor, *Deccan Chronicle*, Hyderabad.

**Shreya Sen-Handley** is the author of the recently published *Strange: Stories, the award-winning Memoirs of My Body, and a forthcoming book of travel misadventures*. Her Twitter and Insta handle is @shreyasenhana.

Subhani



## Is Modi govt ready for Biden-Harris sarkar?



K.C. Singh

The naming of Kamala Devi Harris, an Indian-African-American senator from California, as Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden's running mate, elicited more excitement in the United States and of course in Chennai and elsewhere in India than in ruling BJP circles. When the external affairs ministry's spokesman was asked why no congratulatory message had gone from Prime Minister Narendra Modi or anyone in Cabinet, he incredulously replied that India doesn't interfere in the internal affairs of other countries. Why then, one could ask, did Mr Modi serenade President Donald Trump at the "Howdy Modi" Indian diaspora rally in Houston in September last year? Or goad the crowd by shouting "Abki baar...", awaiting the roaring reply of "Trump sarkar". South Block's nervousness is understandable as external affairs minister S. Jaishankar quarreled with a US congressional committee demanding Indian-origin Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal be excluded for her critique of the Indian government's majoritarian politics. Senator Kamala Harris and other influential Democrats rallied to berate Mr Jaishankar. Ms Harris is, in any case, known human rights crusader.

What then would be Biden-Harris government's foreign policy priorities and their impact on India-US relations, tailored by Modi government to keep Mr Trump's ego massaged. A diaspora assemblage at Houston, followed by lakhs gathered at Ahmedabad, provided Mr Trump the stage

to indulge in populist self-gratification, while irritants like trade were side-stepped. Mr Trump in turn ignored anti-CAA agitation, including rioting in parts of New Delhi as he settled at Rashtrapati Bhavan for the farewell banquet.

James Traub, in *Foreign Policy* magazine, quotes Colin Kahl, then vice-president Joe Biden's national security adviser in 2014-16, that three issues will dominate a Biden administration's agenda. One, the inter-connectedness of the world and global existential challenges like the Covid-19 pandemic; two, democracy at threat across the world; and three, with ongoing power transition between nations the return of great power competition. Mr Biden had earlier this year written in *Foreign Affairs* that the contest between democracy-liberalism and autocracy-fascism did not end in the last century. It lurks in the future again. Mr Biden plans a "Summit for Democracy" in the first year of his presidency. But his vision for resurrection of liberalism and democracy, centres on Europe. By instinct an "Atlanticist" his priority would be revival of European alliance that Mr Trump has scorned. James Traub tellingly remarks: "On many issues, emerging-world democracies like India and Brazil feel much more like the problem than a part of the solution". The smothered voices of liberalism in India would agree.

Many recent books have analysed worldwide democratic recession, seen in Turkey, Poland, Hungary, Brazil, etc. Even autocrats like Russia's Vladimir Putin and Chi-

na's Xi Jinping have eliminated term limits on their rule. *How Democracies Die* by Daniel Ziblatt and Steven Levitsky analyses the malaise. The authors conclude that "Trump's rise may itself pose a challenge to global democracy". Between the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Barack Obama presidency, US governments maintained a broadly pro-democratic foreign policy, except where strategic interests were dominant. But globalisation de-industrialising the US and the rush of immigrants created by Syrian crisis, with greater effect in Europe, and through America's porous southern border created the conditions for the rise of a populist leader playing on the sense of marginalisation of the working and middle-class white majority. The authors' conclusion, written before the pandemic hit the US, is that only President Trump's gross failure would create public disgust and desire for political reform, as happened after Richard Nixon's resignation in 1974. Weighing against this is dominant social media spreading unbridled bigotry, slanted news and prejudice.

America's founding fathers created foolproof institutions and separation of powers to counter power grab by either the executive, legislature or judiciary. They also mandated unwritten shared beliefs and practices that enabled those institutions to work. Two cardinal principles prescribed were mutual tolerance and institutional forbearance. Similar traditions were nurtured in Jawaharlal Nehru's India. Breached in the US, and progressively so in India, these ideals surrendered to highly polarised politics once Newt Gingrich in 1989 gained control over Republicans in two houses of US Congress. Institutional legitimacy of the US Congress got degraded, paving the way for the anti-establishment presidency of Mr Trump. Treating mainstream

media as illegitimate interlopers, attacking political opponents to not just defeat but destroy them and stealing mandates by gerrymandering or vote suppression, as Mr Trump is attempting by attacking postal ballots, or as in India by forming defection-based governments even after losing mandates. All these are signs of slow strangulation of liberal democracy.

New Delhi may today downplay Prime Minister Modi's unwise public political dalliance with Mr Trump, but the latter's campaign is merrily using videos of the Houston and Ahmedabad joint rallies in their publicity blitz to woo Indian-American votes, who mostly favour Democrats. According to Pew Research, Hindus constitute about 51 per cent of the two million-odd diaspora voters, others being Sikhs, Christians and Muslims. Will the diaspora be drawn to Democrats' promises on immigration laws, health insurance and a fairer economic order or accept Mr Modi's endorsement of a divisive, pro-rich Mr Trump, hoping he is better for India?

US voters are living through mishandled pandemic, economic chaos and racial tension caused street violence. Mr Trump is getting traction fanning the white majority's law and order fears, while promising a vaccine and economic turnaround is around the corner. US leadership is critical for addressing vital issues like climate change, anti-globalisation paranoia affecting global trade and investment, and an aggressive China. On November 3 will be known whether a reforming and pro-democracy Biden wins, compelling majoritarian populists globally to reflect and perhaps change, or the US sees the return of disruptive, autocratic and "America First" Trump.

The writer is a former secretary in the external affairs ministry. He tweets at @ambkcsingh.

## LETTERS

## A FATHER'S APPEAL

My son, Arafat (15), is a Class X student of Palong High School. He has been suffering from beta thalassemia and liver disease for a long time. He survives on two bags of blood transfusion every two months. I have to spend a lot on cross-matching, blood donor tests, hospitals, etc. I used to work for a local micro-finance organisation. I lost my job due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Now I am unemployed. I am poor also because my country is poor. Arafat's doctors told me to get him a bone marrow transplant. It costs US \$500,000. It will never be possible for me to raise that huge amount. So I am approaching those with means to help my child. Please write back for details.

**Syed Rafiqul Islam**  
Shariatpur, Bangladesh

## CSK'S FOLLY

THE SPECTRE OF COVID-19 looms large over the Indian Premier League with 12 members of the Chennai Super Kings contingent testing positive for the virus. A right-arm medium-fast bowler, who has recently played for India in white-ball cricket, along with a few staff members are among those affected. The development has forced the MS Dhoni-led side to extend the quarantine till September 1. The team's folly to have a camp in Chennai — which has a whopping number of cases — before boarding the flight to Dubai has stumped many.

**N.J. Ravi Chander**  
Bengaluru

## GOVT TO BLAME

THERE IS OPEN WAR between the Narendra Modi government and states over the goods and services tax compensation which the Centre has refused to provide on a plea of near-bankruptcy, a situation of their own making. The media which is the voice of the people must hold it accountable. The government must borrow from international institutions to tide over this crisis. The Reserve Bank of India, too, must work with states to help them to compensate for the shortfall in GST collection. There is no time to be lost.

**Bhagwan Thadani**  
Mumbai

## CARROT AND STICK

IN A TACTICAL MOVE, the Chinese ambassador has indicated that it is business as usual with New Delhi for Beijing which is keen to continue its trade ties. Sun Weidong also emphasized that the border row is only one incident which cannot decide the whole relationship between the two countries. However, he knows very well that a few words in public does not indicate the true intentions of his government which can be gauged from his other statements conveying that disengaging troops and easing tension along the border might take a long time. India, therefore, must not take him at face value only.

**Santosh K. Satapathy**  
Paralakhemundi

Every Monday the best letter of the week wins ₹500. Email: asianage.letters@gmail.com.

## ‘23 vs 23’: Is affable Ahmed the ‘villain’ of the piece?

## Favouritism stink

It's 23 versus 23. On the face of it, the Congress power struggle is between the 23 dissenters and the Gandhis but a closer look would reveal something additional. Ghulam Nabi Azad, Kapil Sibal, Manish Tiwari and others have problems more with AICC treasurer Ahmed Patel than with Sonia or Rahul. The grudge against otherwise affable Patel is that he is pushing his favourites at all levels of the Congress hierarchy. Since Patel's residential address in New Delhi is 23, Mother Teresa Crescent, Congress insiders are dubbing the leadership challenge as 23 versus 23.

## New kid on the block

The BJP's nominee for a Uttar Pradesh Rajya Sabha seat, Zafar-ul Islam, has a past in the Congress. The BJP spokesman who got his nomination for the remaining term of the late Amar Singh from Uttar Pradesh (in Rajya Sabha bypolls, the ruling

party gets the numerical strength) was a part of the Congress social media team till 2014. Zafar, then an investment banker, had joined Deependra Singh Hooda's team and functioned from 15, Gurudwara Rakabgunj Marg, when he became disillusioned with the grand old party. There has been no looking back since. It is a different matter that not everyone in the BJP is happy over the rise and rise of Zafar-ul Islam. Veteran Shahnawaz Hussain was a contender for the Upper House berth.

## Interminable wait?

Call it a Covid-19 impact but in the coming Parliament session, Central Hall will be out of bounds for journalists and ex-MPs. The Lok Sabha Speaker has already constituted a panel to look into criteria for issuance of Central Hall passes. Cynics believe by the time the panel submits its report there will be a new Parliament building in the central vista. The panel, headed by TV personality Rajat Sharma, has not



By WAQYANAWIS

been meeting as its chairman wants to discuss issues online while most members feel a physical, offline discussion would be suit-

able. Emails are being exchanged to work out a consensus. Meanwhile, senior journalists who have passes in the Long and Distinguished (L&D) category are most exercised over the delay.

## Azad's motivations

The Congress disquiet has rattled many, particularly the manner in which Ghulam Nabi Azad has turned dissident. Azad's term is ending in early 2021 and there is no sign of renomination. At present Azad is the Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, enjoying the perks of a Union minister. There is likelihood that Mallikarjun Kharge, who was the Congress leader in the Lok Sabha during 2014-2019, may get the job in the Upper House. Some Congress insiders see more in Azad's defiance pointing that he has been the only former J&K chief minister who was not booked or detained under the Public Safety Act after the abrogation of Article 370. There is also talk of misuse of the Jammu and Kashmir State Lands (Vesting of

Ownership to the Occupants) Act, 2001, popularly known as the Roshni Act during Azad's chief ministerial stint. Investigations into the land transfers subsequently said to have found that land in Gulmarg and elsewhere in the valley had been given over to ineligible beneficiaries.

## Surrender to Sangh

BJP leader Jyotiraditya Scindia was Brecently at the RSS headquarters in Nagpur. It prompted Digvijaya Singh and a number of Madhya Pradesh Congress leaders to twist a notable Buddhist chant, *Buddham Sharanam Gachchhami*, to "Sangham Charanam Gachchhami". In the original chanting, the disciple supposedly surrenders to the Buddha, the awakened one but in the perverted form, Scindia is accused of taking a shelter in RSS.

The writer is a keen observer of the goings-on in backrooms of power



— AFP



## OUR CRITIC'S RATING

Outstanding ★★★★★ | Great ★★★★★ | Good ★★★ | Okay ★★ | Poor ★ | Truly Terrible TT

## Black Panther Chadwick dies of cancer

**Los Angeles:** First Chadwick Boseman slipped on the cleats of Jackie Robinson, then the Godfather of Soul's dancing shoes, portraying both Black American icons with a searing intensity that commanded respect. When the former playwright suited up as Black Panther, he brought cool intellectual gravitas to the Marvel superhero whose "Wakanda forever!" salute reverberated worldwide.

As his Hollywood career boomed, though, Boseman was privately undergoing "countless surgeries and chemotherapy" to battle colon cancer, his family said in a statement announcing his death at age 43 on Friday. He'd been diagnosed at stage 3 in 2016 but never spoke publicly about it.

The cancer was there when his character T'Challa visited the ancestors' "astral plane" in poignant scenes from the Oscar-nominated *Black Panther*, there when he first became a producer on the action thriller *21 Bridges*, and there last summer when he shot an adaptation of a play by his hero August Wilson. It was there when he played a radical Black leader — seen only in flashbacks and visions — whose death is mourned by Vietnam War comrades-in-arms in Spike Lee's *Da 5 Bloods*.

"A true fighter, Chadwick persevered through it all, and brought you many of the films you have come to love so much," his family said.

"It was the honor of his career to bring King T'Challa to life in Black Panther," Boseman died at his home in the Los Angeles area with his wife and family by his side, his publicist Nicki Fioravante told The Associated Press.

Boseman is survived by his wife and a parent and had no children, Fioravante said.

Born and raised in South Carolina, where he played Little League baseball and AAU basketball, Boseman graduated from Howard University in Washington, D.C. He wrote plays, acted and directed in theater and had small roles in television before landing his breakthrough role.

His striking portrayal of the color-line-demolishing baseball star Robinson opposite Harrison Ford in 2013's *42* drew attention in Hollywood and made him a star. A year later, he wowed audiences as Brown in the biopic *Get On Up*.

Boseman died on a day that Major League Baseball was celebrating Jackie Robinson day. "His transcendent performance in *42* will stand the test of time and serve as a powerful vehicle to tell Jackie's story to audiences for generations to come," the league wrote in a tweet.

Expressions of shock and despair poured in late Friday from fellow actors, athletes, musicians, Hollywood titans, fans and politicians. Viola Davis, who acted alongside Boseman in "Get On Up" and the upcoming Wilson adaptation, said: "Chadwick....no words to express my devastation of losing you. Your talent, your spirit, your heart, your authenticity."

"He was a gentle soul and a brilliant artist, who will stay with us for eternity through his iconic performances," said Denzel Washington, who funded a scholarship Boseman used to study theater at Oxford and produced the upcoming Wilson film.

Disney executive chairman Bob Iger called Boseman "an extraordinary talent, and one of the most gentle and giving souls I have ever met."

*Captain America* actor Chris Evans called Boseman "a true original. He was a deeply committed and constantly curious artist. He had so much amazing work still left to create."

Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden tweeted that Boseman "inspired

generations and showed them they can be anything they want — even super heroes." Boseman's final tweet was an image of himself and US Senator Kamala Harris, celebrating her selection as Biden's running mate.

His T'Challa character was first introduced to the blockbuster Marvel cinematic universe in 2016's *Captain America: Civil War*, and his Wakanda forever" salute became a pop culture landmark after the release of *Black Panther* two years ago.

"I don't think the world was ready for a *Black Panther* movie before this moment. Socially and politically, it wasn't ready for it," he told AP at the time.

The film's vision of Afrofuturism and the technologically advanced civilisation of Wakanda resonated with audiences, some of whom wore African attire to showings and helped propel "Black Panther" to more than \$1.3 billion in global box office. It is the only Marvel Studios film to receive a best picture Oscar nomination.

Boseman said he more easily identified with the film's antagonist, played by Michael B. Jordan, who had been cut off from his ancestral roots: "I was born with some Killmonger in me, and I have learned to T'Challa throughout my studies," he told AP while promoting the film.

"It's the place where you start. All African Americans, unless they have some direct connection, have been severed from that past. There's things that cannot be tracked," he continued.

"You were a product, sold. So it's very difficult as an African American to connect at some points directly to Africa. I have made that part of my search in my life. So those things were already there when I got into the role."

The character was last seen standing silently dressed in a black suit at Tony Stark's funeral in *Avengers: Endgame*. A *Black Panther* sequel had been announced, and was one of the studio's most anticipated upcoming films.

Even at the outset of his Hollywood career, Boseman was clear-eyed about — and even skeptical of — the industry in which he would become an international star.

"You don't have the same exact experience as a Black actor as you do as a white actor. You don't have the same opportunities. That's evident and true," he told AP while promoting "42." "The best way to put it is: How often do you see a movie about a black hero who has a love story ... he has a spirituality. He has an intellect. It's weird to say it, but it doesn't happen that often."

*Black Panther*, written and directed by Ryan Coogler, helped drive a conversation in Hollywood about the importance of featuring non-white characters in and hiring non-white filmmakers for its most high-profile films. Actor Simu Liu, starring in Marvel's first film centered on an Asian character, tweeted: "Without Chadwick, and what he gave to his character, there is no Shang Chi. Period. My career rides on the coattails of a great man."

In addition to Robinson and Brown, Boseman portrayed the future US Supreme Court Justice

Thurgood Marshall in 2017's *Marshall*. He humanised the larger-than-life historical figures with the same soulful, reserved dignity — interrupted by flashes of sparkling wit — that he would later bring to T'Challa.

He took on his first producing job in last year's action thriller *21 Bridges*, in which he also starred. Boseman completed one last performance, in a Netflix adaptation of August Wilson's *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*.

He revered the playwright famous for his depiction of the Black experience, writing in a 2013 Los Angeles Times essay: "For the songs, rituals and folklore that were lost in slavery's middle passage, his plays are those forgotten songs remixed for the struggles of adapting to these shores ... In the similar way that Wilson's work was influenced by the blues of Bessie Smith, Muddy Waters and W.C. Handy, my plays were infused with Tupac, Biggie and Black Star."

Boseman first got into theater, acting and writing plays as an undergrad at Howard. He visited Africa for the first time during college with director and theater professor Mike Malone, working in Ghana to preserve and cel-

brate rituals with performances on a proscenium stage. He told AP the trip had been "one of the most significant learning experiences of my life."

Boseman had roles on TV shows like ABC Family's *Lincoln Heights* and NBC's *Persons Unknown*, but before *42* he had only acted in one film, 2008's football drama *The Express*.

Asked about his own childhood heroes and icons, Boseman cited Black political leaders and musicians: Malcolm X, Martin Luther King Jr., Bob Marley, Public Enemy, A Tribe Called Quest and Prince.

While deeply private and often guarded in his public appearances and interviews, he made clear that he understood the significance of his work and its impact on the broader culture.

At the 2019 Screen Actors Guild Awards, *Black Panther* won best ensemble, electrifying the room.

Before an auditorium full of actors, Chadwick Boseman stepped to the microphone. He quoted Nina Simone: "To be young, gifted and black," and put the moment in context.

"We know what it's like to be told there isn't a screen for you to be featured on, a stage for you to be featured on. ... We know what's like to be beneath and not above. And that is what we went to work with every day," said Boseman. "We knew that we could create a world that exemplified a world we wanted to see. We knew that we had something to give."

— AP



What a gentle gifted soul. Showing us all that greatness between surgeries and chemotherapy. This is what dignity looks like

— Oprah Winfrey, TV star and author

Chadwick Boseman brought history to life on the silver screen, from Jackie Robinson, James Brown and Thurgood Marshall. As Black Panther, he was also a superhero to many. And despite his 4 year long battle with cancer, he kept fighting and he kept inspiring. He will be missed.

— Martin Luther King III, eldest son of civil rights activist Martin Luther King Jr

Chadwick's passing is absolutely devastating. He was our T'Challa, our Black Panther, and our dear friend... Each time he appeared on screen, he created something truly indelible... Our hearts are broken and our thoughts are with Chadwick Boseman's family. Your legacy will live on forever. Rest In Peace.

— Marvel president Kevin Feige

He was a gentle soul and a brilliant artist, who will stay with us for eternity through his iconic performances over his short yet illustrious career. God bless Chadwick Boseman.

— Denzel Washington

Here's to an incredible man with immeasurable talent, who leaned into life regardless of his personal battles. You never truly know what the people around you might be going through - treat them with kindness and cherish every minute you have together. RIP.

— Halle Berry



I woke up to the saddest news of Chadwick passing away. It's been such a heavy year for all of us. But that news broke me. He was such a shining light. Wakanda forever.

— Lewis Hamilton, Racing driver



## This road to boredom is paved with cliches from the '80

## Sadak 2

**CAST:** Sanjay Dutt, Alia Bhatt, Aditya Roy Kapoor, Jisshu Sengupta, Makarand Deshpande, Gulshan Grover, Priyanka Bose, Mohan Kapoor

**DIRECTOR:** Mahesh Bhatt

**RATING:** ★★

Streaming on Disney+Hotstar

## SUPARNA SHARMA

*Sadak 2* is a homely production of the Bhatts. Daddy Mahesh Bhatt has directed his younger daughter in a sequel to his 1991 film, *Sadak*, which starred his elder daughter, Pooja Bhatt. Both films were produced by his bro, Mukesh Bhatt.

Sanjay Dutt was the hero of that film, and he is the hero of this film as well. He bashed up bad-guy Sadashiv Amrapurkar then because, I suspect, he kept stealing the heroine's clothes and wigs and prancing around in them. Now too he beats up the baddie, Gyaan Prakash "Guruji" (Makarand Deshpande), when he appears in a gotta-patti lehnga-dupatta that the heroine had probably kept for a special night.

Daddy Bhatt has returned to direction after 19-20 years. In his long career, the prolific director made *Arth*, *Saaranish*, *Janam*, *Naam* — stellar films in a large pool of tedious

mediocrity. But he has never in his life made a film as bad as *Sadak 2*.

Watching *Sadak 2* felt like he had regurgitated the indigestibles of *Sadak*, which wasn't a great film to begin with, but worked then because of the innocent impishness and lisp of Pooja Bhatt, Sadashiv's stellar evil act and catchy songs.

*Sadak 2*, which is quite literally set in *Sadak* — in the sense of what became of those characters — takes off on the exact same journey with ill-conceived characters who seem to belong nowhere except the godowns where terribly tacky, B-grade scripts of the 1980s were discarded.

Aarya (Alia Bhatt) is a riche-rich heiress of the Desai Group of Industries, owned by Papa Yogesh Desai (Jisshu Sengupta) and mummy Shakuntala. At 21, she is to inherit it all.

But Shakuntala is dead and replaced. Nandini Maa (Priyanka Bose) is Aarya's maasi and new mommy. She is also, perhaps, the murderer of her sister at the behest of Guruji.

So Aarya rages and devotes herself to waging an Instagram war against him. This involves wearing a hoodie and entering his ashram to set fire to Guruji's larger-than-life cutout.

I request you, dear reader, to pause and consider this: Aarya in a hoodie first spray-paints "BADLA" on Guruji's cutout, then pours petrol on it and sets it on fire. As it burns, she starts recording it and posts it on her @IndiaAgainstFakeGurus account,



#Victory.

What was the point of spraying the word "BADLA" when she was going to set fire to it?

Anyway.

A few seconds later, when accosted by Guruji's armed chellas, Aarya points two fingers and pretends to shoot, saying, "Thish".

Aarya is deemed mentally unstable by Nandini Maa and given the aforementioned sequence of events, there may be merit in that diagnosis.

Meanwhile, somewhere in Mumbai, Ravi (Sanjay Dutt), the owner of Pooja Tours and Travels, is crying and smelling a saree. He keeps talking to Pooja under whose large black & white poster a scented candle burns. He is so sad that he decides to off himself. But the ceiling hinge can't take his weight. He is rushed to the same psychiatric hospital where Aarya is being

treated.

Upon return, Ravi gets busy trying another contraption to off himself, but Aarya, having escaped her luxurious house that looks like a banquet of banquet halls designed by JJ Valaya, keeps knocking on his door. It seems that three months ago Pooja took her booking to be driven to Kailash Parvat.

Meanwhile, Gyaan Prakash appears in a tiny black dhoti and wearing the entire Tribal collection of Amrapali jewellery, in gold. His hair is frizzy and so is his ominous chatter which amounts to ordering the offering of a young heiress.

Enroute to Kailash, Aarya tells Ravi to take a detour to a jail. When he asks why, we are treated to a dull millennial flashback that involves trolling, devoted activists and a meeting of the two.

Only two activists of India Fights

Fake Gurus matter to *Sadak 2* — Aarya and one troll-turned-ally, Vishal (Aditya Roy Kapoor).

Vishal emerges from Central Jail with a guitar dangling on one shoulder and an ullu in a cage in his other hand. It's as if he wasn't serving a sentence for a heinous crime but was invited by the inmates to sing and strum his guitar for a weekend gig.

Ravi doesn't like Vishal, but he likes Kumbhkaran the ullu and they briefly form a bond which reminded me of Iqbal and Allah Rakha (Coolie).

In flashback we see Aarya and Vishal arguing over the need to fight and vishwas and rich kids faking concern, all without even a hint of irony given the fact that they are on their way to Kailash Parvat to say Har Har Mahadev.

Aarya discovers that at least two people she trusted have been planted by Guruji to off her, and Ravi decides that given Aarya's mental state and the irritating imbecility displayed by Vishal, one Hathkata goon (Gulshan Grover) and a cop played by Bollywood's always reliable overactor (Mohan Kapoor), he has to take charge. So he goes forth alone, chanting Ram Naam Satya Hai. Lucky for him, all the people he needs to off are gathered in the banquet designed by Valaya.

After a bloody "thish-thish" climax comes a press conference. This scene, which goes on and on, is so bad and boring that I felt like not only had we just been served the most tasteless dish by a chef we had gone to expectantly, but as he turned to walk away,

he let out a loud, smelly fart.

Alia Bhatt has never been so bad or looked so lost, although the same can't be said about Aditya Roy Kapoor. Like in many of his films, here too he seems as if he had come to the sets to hang, but was suddenly told to go change and say two-three lines.

Watching Priyanka Bose "act" is a chore. It's as she can only play Lady Macbeth going mental, over and over.

*Sadak 2*'s screenplay, written by Mahesh Bhatt and Sumitra Sengupta, was probably completed on a post-it note. It first festoons it's two young characters with random millennial characteristics and ticks and then incarcerates them in a story from the 1980s.

Every cliché that had been discarded and forgotten is revived to fill in two hours.

Mahesh Bhatt's forte has always been neurosis, quivering love, intense intimacy, insecurity. But here, with characters created out of Bollywood's thin air, it's all either claustrophobic or plain stupid.

Sanjay Dutt still has the power to command the screen, but he has just two things to do here — look teary-eyed at Pooja's photo, or babble to her pret atma that talks back sometimes.

Jisshu Sengupta is quite good, but Makarand Deshpande, who came all dressed up to be the centre of a bad boy party, gets one-and-a-half scene, an itsy-bitsy lungi and no conditioner. Any wonder he stole the heroine's clothes?



## SHORT TAKES

## Humpy helps India reach final

**Chennai:** Koneru Humpy took the spotlight as she beat Monika Socko in a nervy tie-break to help India pip Poland in the semifinals and reach the summit clash of the FIDE Online Chess Olympiad on Saturday. After the two teams won one round each in regular play, world rapid champion Humpy was pitted against Socko for the Armageddon (a tie-break), and the Indian beat her rival in style with black pieces to clinch a spot in the final. India will play the winner of the other semifinal between Russia and the USA, in the summit clash on Sunday. It was, however, not an easy job for the Indian team as they lost the first round 2-4 before bouncing back strongly in the second with a crushing 4.5-1.5 win. Humpy did the rest in the match-deciding tie-break. Viswanathan Anand came into his own with a much-needed win over Jan-Krzysztof Duda in 78 moves in the second round after losing to his opponent in the first round. — *PTI*

## Djokovic in final, Osaka withdraws

**New York:** World number one Novak Djokovic battled into the ATP and WTA Western & Southern Open final despite a neck problem while Japan's Naomi Osaka withdrew from the tournament after reaching the final due to a left hamstring injury on Saturday, just two days before the start of the US Open. Djokovic was treated twice by a trainer for neck issues but rallied to defeat Spanish eighth seed Roberto Bautista Agut 4-6, 6-4, 7-6 (7/0). He will face Milos Raonic in Saturday's final after the Canadian eliminated Greek fourth seed Stefanos Tsitsipas 7-6 (7/5), 6-3. The world number 10's withdrawal means meaning Victoria Azarenka takes the title by walkover. "I'm sorry to have to withdraw today with an injury," said Osaka. — *AFP*

## Kristoff wins first stage of Tour

**Nice, France:** Norway's Alexander Kristoff won the opening stage of the Tour de France on Saturday in a mass bunch sprint along the iconic Promenade des Anglais in Nice. UAE Team Emirates rider Kristoff takes hold of the race leader's yellow jersey following a stage littered with crashes on a slippery 154km loop around Nice, where the finish line was limited to just 100 spectators due to strict coronavirus health protocols.

The Tour de France set off from the French Riviera on Saturday, two months later than planned and under the shadow of a coronavirus pandemic which could still shatter hopes of the world's greatest bike race making it to the Paris finish line in three weeks' time. — *AFP*

## NBA playoffs set to resume

**Washington:** NBA playoff games are set to resume on Saturday, but players are determined to keep the focus on the fight for social justice and racial equality with the help from club owners and the league. NBA commissioner Adam Silver and National Basketball Players Association executive director Michele Roberts said in a joint statement on Friday that "All parties agreed to resume NBA playoff games on Saturday". Players and the league agreed to form a social justice coalition to address a broad range of issues including access to voting, promoting civic engagement and police and criminal justice reform. — *AFP*

## Live on TV

## FORMULA ONE

**Belgian Grand Prix**  
Main Race from 6.35 pm on Star Sports Select 2, HD

## CRICKET

**England vs Pakistan**  
Second T20 from 6.30 pm on Sony Six, HD

**Caribbean Premier League**  
Barbados Tridents vs St Lucia Zouks from 7.30 pm; St Kitts & Nevis Patriots vs Guyana Amazon Warriors from 11.30 pm on Star Sports 1, 2, HD

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## DOUBLE WHAMMY

## Raina pulls out of IPL, virus count touches 13

C. SANTHOSH KUMAR  
CHENNAI, AUG. 29

Over a dozen Covid-19 positive cases in the Chennai Super Kings camp and a surprise pullout by Suresh Raina have sent shock waves across IPL teams based in Dubai and Abu Dhabi. Even though the other teams have settled into their bubbles and begun training, the Covid-19 scare has raised serious doubts about the tournament, scheduled to start on September 19.

The BCCI is yet to announce the fixtures as different health protocols in Dubai and Abu Dhabi have complicated the scheduling issue.

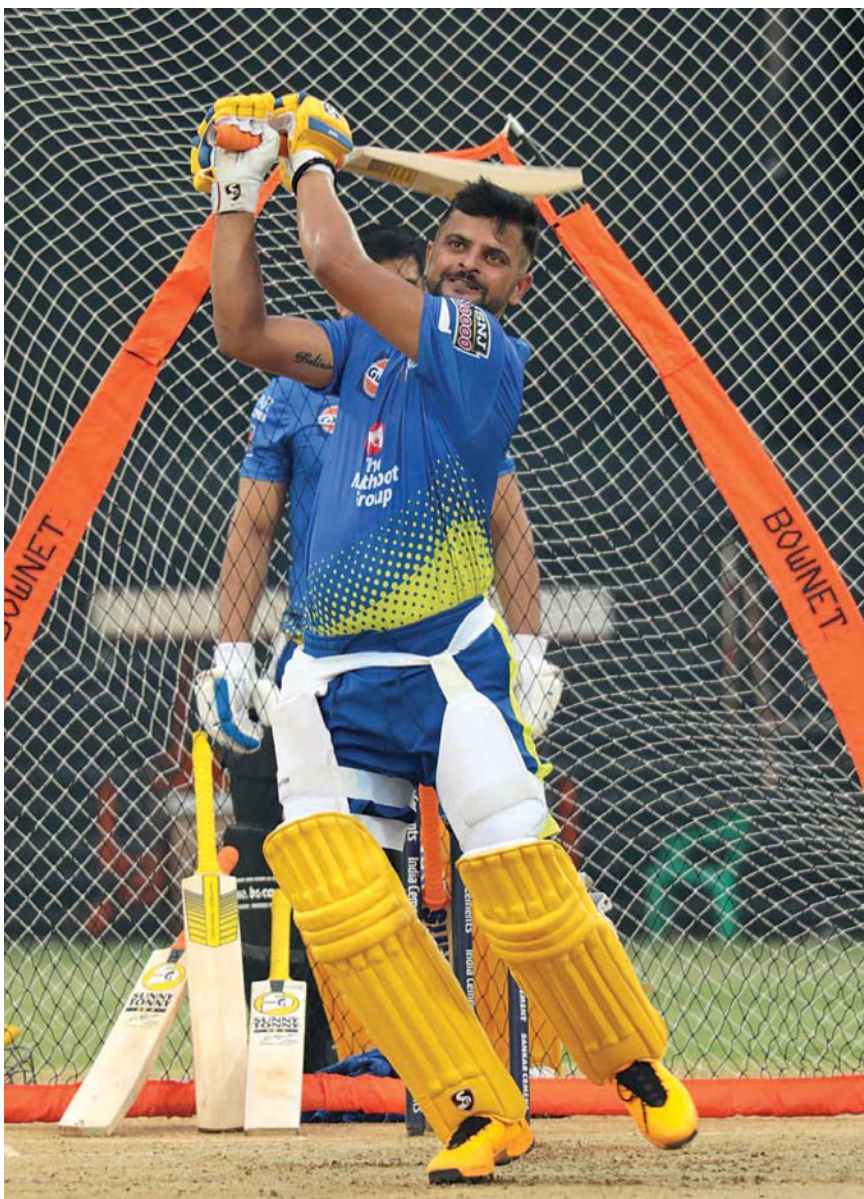
As defending champions, Mumbai Indians were expected to take on CSK in the opener but now that the M.S. Dhoni-led team's pre-tournament camp is in disarray, BCCI could give them extra time and rework the plan.

A top CSK official said the team is looking to start training by September 5, with those who tested positive expected to rejoin the bio-bubble later.

As many as 13 from CSK have tested positive and all of them have been moved to a different hotel for a two-week isolation. "All the affected personnel as well as their close contacts are asymptomatic and have been isolated from other team members," said a BCCI release without mentioning the name of the franchise or players.

## FOCUS ON COUNSELLING

As Raina was reportedly 'worried' about the growing number of cases within the bubble and dealing with family issues, the focus of the teams has now shifted to counselling their players. A few teams, including the Super Kings, are said to have sought help from mental health experts to deal with the situation. "It's very important to survive in a bio-bubble where players have to cope with Covid-19 fear, isolation and anxiety. We sense that some players are not their usual self with so many restrictions and



Suresh Raina bats during a training session in Chennai in this file photo.

protocols to follow," a team official said. Players have been constantly monitored through a gadget (a fob) which they are supposed to wear all the time.

Apart from that, they have to feed their body temperature in a mobile app on a daily basis.

## FOREIGN PLAYER JITTERY

A foreign player who is currently in the CSK bio-bubble has reportedly raised concerns over the pre-departure conditioning camp in Chennai which is believed to be the source of infection. A net bowler and a member of the social media team had to be left out of the contingent after they

tested positive in Chennai. CSK were the only team to organise a pre-departure conditioning camp for their Indian players at the insistence of skipper Dhoni. The 'jittery' foreign player has questioned the decision to hold the camp in a city that witnesses at least 1,000 new positive cases every day.

## BHAJJU TO JOIN CSK CAMP ON SEPT. 1

Off-spinner Harbhajan Singh, who opted out of CSK's conditioning camp in Chennai, is expected to join the squad on September 1. He had withdrawn from the team's travel schedule because of personal reasons.

## Hamilton dedicates pole to Boseman

**Spa-Francorchamps (Belgium), Aug. 29:** Lewis Hamilton delivered two successive record breaking qualifying laps to claim his sixth Belgian Grand Prix pole position and a record-increasing 93rd of his career with a flawless demonstration of speed on Saturday.

The championship leader clocked a best lap in one minute and 41.252 seconds in the final seconds of a session that he dominated in a personal tribute to the Hollywood film actor Chadwick Boseman, who died on Friday. His Mercedes team-mate Valtteri Bottas was second, to complete another 'black

● It was Hamilton's fifth pole in seven races this year, a feat he said he had wanted to achieve in memory of Boseman whose life had been an inspiration to Hamilton.

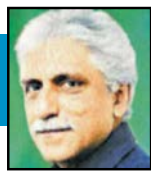
arrows' front row of the grid, but he was more than half a second adrift of Hamilton's pace.

It was Hamilton's fifth pole in seven races this year, a feat he said he had wanted to achieve in memory of Boseman whose life had been an inspiration to Hamilton.

"Today was a very, very clean session for me and the end of the lap was getting better and better. We did such a lot of work for this in the back-ground."

Max Verstappen, who trails Hamilton by 37 points in the drivers' title race, took third place for Red Bull ahead of Renault's Daniel Ricciardo, who aborted his final lap, and Alex Albon in the second Red Bull. After winning last year's race, Charles Leclerc and his Ferrari team-mate Sebastian Vettel were eliminated during Q2 and will start Sunday's race from 13th and 14th positions.

— *AFP*



Ayaz Memon  
Over The Top

Star player Suresh Raina pulling out of the IPL for 'personal reasons' just a day after a clutch of people attached to the Chennai Super Kings squad in the UAE tested positive for Covid made it a double whammy for the franchise and the league.

On Friday evening, news emerged from Dubai that several from the CSK group had tested positive. Identities and precise number of those infected by the virus was not clarified by either the franchise or the

BCCI. In these excruciating circumstances this is neither smart nor desirable.

On Saturday afternoon, the BCCI finally put out an official release, confirming that 13 people associated with the tournament — players, support staff, management, etc — had tested positive. The release, however, did not still identify those afflicted.

Nor did the franchise (assuming CSK is the only affected party), which created more questions than were answered. Raina

returning home for reasons unknown exacerbated the situation.

The franchise was perhaps looking to do damage control, and the BCCI for a full status report before going public. Both understandable in ordinary circumstances. But secrecy in these times is an invitation to wild speculation.

The BCCI did clarify though that all 13 who tested positive "as well as their close contacts are asymptomatic and have been isolated from other team members". They will be attended to by the IPL medical staff.

This is in keeping with standard operating procedures.

That prompt action has been taken is also reassuring, but I still can't fathom the need to hide the identi-

ties of those infected. It tinges the situation unnecessarily with controversy. More importantly, it is unfair on everybody else involved in the tournament.

It is unclear what 'personal reasons' prompted Raina to return. There could be some other compelling grounds, but for argument's sake, it is perfectly reasonable if this was because of Covid-related anxiety too.

Since the time big time cricket resumed in June, players have been given the liberty to join a series/tournament or not, without fear of recrimination. Three West Indies players — Shimron

Hetmyer, Darren Bravo and Kemo Paul — skipped the tour to England for personal safety.

Dread of the Coronavirus is not misplaced, and players cannot be faulted for prioritising their families and themselves over cricket. That elite athletes are immune to Covid 19 because of their supreme fitness, has been shown to be a fallacy.

Tennis world no.1 Novak Djokovic, among the fittest sportspersons on the planet, tested positive (along with some other players) during the ill-fated Adria Tour he organized a few months back.

Djokovic had cavalierly underplayed the Covid threat. Players on the Adria Tour mixed with spectators, in fact even attended after match parties where social distancing was completely disregarded. The consequences were harrowing.

This brings us back to the issue of the 13 people in the IPL who have tested positive in the UAE. How did this happen when they had cleared everything that the bio-secure bubble protocol demanded before leaving for the gulf a week back, as also in the time there subsequently before the calamitous tests on Friday?

Was it that the tests done in India or the earlier ones in UAE, were erratic? This is not impossible. Remember Mohammed Hafeez's flip-flop test results before he was cleared to join the Pakistan team to England? Was the problem then in the diagnostic analyses done earlier?

Or is it because these people came in contact with carriers of Corona in some

other way, which suggests a loophole in the bio-secure bubble, or a contravention of laid down SOPs? This becomes a far more serious issue if true.

Whatever the cause, events of the past couple of days should set alarm bells clanging violently in the BCCI. There clearly needs to be a more diligent implementation of the SOPs with the active and total participation of franchise owners/management, players, support staff et al. The vigil has to be strict, and even the most minor transgression — by anybody — has to be treated unsparingly.

If the problem is not arrested asap, the league itself could collapse. Worse, it would also imperil India's tour of Australia scheduled at the year-end.

## NATIONAL SPORTS | DAY

## Players receive awards virtually

**New Delhi, Aug. 29:** India's sporting heroes were bestowed the annual national awards in an unparalleled online ceremony amid the COVID-19 pandemic during which athletes logged in from multiple cities to be honoured by President Ram Nath Kovind.

This year a whopping 74 were picked for the national honours, including an unprecedented five Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratnas and 27 Arjuna awardees.

Of these, 60 attended the virtual ceremony conducted across 11 Sports Authority of India (SAI) centres in various cities.

Cricketers Rohit Sharma (Khel Ratna) and Ishant Sharma (Arjuna) missed the ceremony due to their IPL commitments, while star wrestler Vinesh Phogat (Khel Ratna) and shuttler Satwiksairaj Rankireddy (Arjuna) had to pull out of the ceremony after testing positive for the Coronavirus.

The other three Khel Ratna winners — table tennis player Manika Batra, Paralympic gold-medallist Mariyappan Thangavelu and women's hockey team captain Rani Rampal — attended the ceremony.

While Batra logged in from Pune, Thangavelu

and Rampal joined from the Bengaluru SAI centre.

President Kovind applauded as names of the attending awardees were called out and their achievements cited as is the convention.

Missing, however, was the grandeur of the Rashtrapati Bhavan's Durbar Hall.

Sports minister Kiren Rijiju on Saturday defended his government's decision to confer a record 74 National Sports Awards this year, including an unprecedented five Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna honours, a move which faced severe criticism from all quarters.

## RIJIJU CONDOLES RAI'S DEATH

Rijiju on Saturday condoled the death of veteran athletics coach Purushottam Rai, who was to receive this year's Dronacharya award in the lifetime category.

Rai, who was to be bestowed the honour on Saturday and had even participated in the dress rehearsal for the first-of-its-kind virtual ceremony, died on Friday evening after suffering a heart attack in Bengaluru. He was 79. — *PTI*

## MASSIVE HIKE IN PRIZE MONEY OF RATNA, ARJUNA

**New Delhi, Aug. 29:** Sports minister Kiren Rijiju on Saturday officially announced a massive hike in the prize money in four of the seven categories of the National Sports and Adventure Awards.

The prize money for the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award has been increased to a whopping ₹25 lakh from the previous amount of ₹7.5 lakh, while Arjuna Award has been enhanced to ₹15 lakh from ₹5 lakh.

The Dronacharya (Lifetime) awardees, who were earlier given ₹5 lakh, will now be richer by ₹15 lakh, while Dronacharya (Regular) winners will be given ₹10 lakh instead of ₹5 lakh.

The prize money of Dhyan Chand Award has been increased to ₹10 lakh from ₹5 lakh. The hike will come into effect from this year. — *PTI*

## 14-year struggle paid off: Dutee

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO  
BHUBANESWAR, AUG. 29

Ace sprinter from Odisha Dutee Chand, who was on Saturday conferred with the prestigious Arjuna Award for the year 2020, said her struggle had brought her 'sweet successes and recognitions'.

"My 14 years of struggle and hard work has brought me enough successes and recognition. This Arjun Award is a very special recognition for me. Every sportsperson cherishes a dream to get it in his lifetime," Dutee said while receiving the award from President Ram Nath Kovind.

The athlete who in the past faced questions on her gender and was banned temporarily from international events thanked followers and supporters for standing by her during hard times.

She also took to micro-blogging site Twitter and wrote, "Grateful and proud of my journey till now. Lots to achieve still. Let's

● Dutee Chand was among 27 sportspersons to have been selected for the Arjuna Award. With this, she became the ninth Arjuna awardee from Odisha.

get to work!"

The sprint queen of India was nominated for the award in the discipline of athletics. She was among 27 sportspersons to have been selected for the Arjuna Award. With this, she became the ninth Arjuna awardee from Odisha.

Earlier, eight sportspersons from Odisha have won the Arjuna Award. They include Minati Mohapatra (cyclist), Bijay Kumar Sachpathy (weightlifter), Rachita Mistry (athlete), Dilip Tirkey (hockey), Jyoti Sunita Kullu (hockey), Ignace Tirkey (hockey), K. Ravi Kumar (weightlifter), and Pramod Bhagat (para-badminton).