





## IN BRIEF

**Noida: 12 held during weekend lockdown**

**Noida:** A dozen people were arrested across Noida and Greater Noida on Sunday for alleged violation of the curbs imposed due to the Covid outbreak, Gautam Buddh Nagar police said. Also, owners of more than 1,700 vehicles were issued challans, while another 19 vehicles were impounded for similar violations in the district, which has so far recorded over 7,800 positive cases of Covid including 45 deaths, according to official figures. Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) Section 144, which bars assembly of more than four persons, is in force in Gautam Buddh Nagar in view of the pandemic, officials said. The security checks were intensified over the weekend in view of the lockdown-like curbs which will continue till 5 am on Monday, they said. "A total of 4,254 vehicles were checked across 200 barrier points in the district and challans issued to 1,727 of them while another 19 were impounded for violating the curbs placed due to Covid Covid," the police said in a statement. — PTI

**11-year-old killed in accident in Dwarka**

**New Delhi:** An 11-year-old boy was killed after the car in which he was travelling hit a divider and flipped over multiple times in Dwarka's Sector 22 area, police said on Sunday. The boy, identified as Mayank, was travelling with his father, mother, a two-year-old sister and grandmother on Thursday night in Dwarka when the incident took place, a senior police officer said. They were returning from a relative's house and his father was driving the car while the boy was sitting alongside, he said. During the incident, Mayank died on the spot while his other family members sustained minor injuries, the officer added. The body was handed over to the family after conducting a post-mortem, police said. A case under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) has been registered at Dwarka's Sector 23 police station.

**Jindal Institute offers free webinars**

**New Delhi:** The Jindal Naturecure Institute has launched virtual initiatives for the public, including webinars and yoga sessions online, to promote good health practices and enable them to stay fit and healthy during the ongoing pandemic. The webinar and yoga classes are offered free of cost to ensure that patients have access to essential medical advice when strict social distancing norms are enforced. Naturopathy consists of a series of non-invasive treatments, dietary changes, and lifestyle modifications. When combined with yoga practice, it helps prevent NCDs (non-communicable disease) and lifestyle disorders including diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, and rheumatoid arthritis to name a few. The recommendations are designed to help patients keep their vital health parameters in the healthy range and reduce their dependence on allopathic medication.

**ASHA, Anganwadi to restart operations**

**New Delhi:** From September, the Delhi government will accelerate its child immunisation programme in the national capital, which was stopped due to the Covid enforced lockdown. The Delhi Women and Child Development minister, Rajendra Pal Gautam, said that the ongoing activity of immunisation was disrupted due to the Covid induced lockdown but after partial unlock immunisation has been considered an essential aspect for which a decision has been taken to restore the facilities for children in the best possible manner. On Sunday, Mr Gautam chaired a review meeting for vaccination and facilitation of medical services through ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activists) and Anganwadi workers in the community. The meeting was attended by the senior officers of the department of Delhi Women and Child Development (DWCD) and department of health (DOH) of the national capital.



Security personnel stand guard outside Jama Masjid during Muharram in Old Delhi on Sunday.

— PTI

## ■ Accused raised 'Khalistan' flag on terrace of DCP's office

# 2 of Khalistan Zindabad Force wanted in sedition case held

**BHASKAR HARI SHARMA**  
NEW DELHI, AUG. 30

The Delhi police has arrested two suspected members of banned terrorist outfit Khalistan Zindabad Force from the national capital, officials said on Sunday.

They have been identified as Inderjeet Singh Gill (31) and Jaspal Singh (27), both residents of Moga district in Punjab. They were wanted in a sedition case registered at Moga, the police said.

The two had allegedly raised a 'Khalistan' flag on the terrace of the deputy commissioner's office in Moga on the eve of Independence Day and also desecrated an Indian flag in the premises, a senior police officer said.

On Saturday, the police received information that two members of Khalistan Zindabad Force would be coming to Delhi to commit some anti-national activities on the directions of their foreign based commanders, the officer said.

► The two had allegedly raised a 'Khalistan' flag on the terrace of the deputy commissioner's office in Moga on the eve of Independence Day and also desecrated an Indian flag in the premises

► On Aug. 8, Jagga and his brother persuaded accuses to listen to a banned YouTube channel, 'Sikhs for Justice.' He also told him to vote for Khalistan on a WhatsApp to be sent by them and become its member.

Thereafter, a trap was laid near Shani Mandir on G.T. Karnal Road.

"Around 6.30 pm, two persons were seen standing near Shani Mandir bus stand. When the police was approaching them, they started moving towards the service road coming from Singhu border. However, they were apprehended after a quick chase," DCP (Special Cell) Sanjeev Kumar Yadav said.

During interrogation, it was revealed that Gill used to work as a driver.

On August 8, his maternal brother Jagga persuaded him to listen to a banned YouTube channel, 'Sikhs for Justice.' He

also told him to vote for Khalistan on a WhatsApp link to be sent by them and become its member. Gill subscribed to the channel and started watching it, the DCP said.

On August 9, he received a WhatsApp link where he cast his vote for Khalistan.

Gill further said that one Rana from the US and one other person gave lecture on the channel delivering anti-India preaching and also asked Sikh youths to build Khalistan, wave Khalistan flag, and tear the Indian flag on August 14, 15, and 16, he said.

Rana had declared a

reward of \$ 2,500 for waving the Khalistan flag and for tearing the Indian flag at Moga and a reward of \$ 1,25,000 for doing the same on the Red Fort and other historical buildings, Mr Yadav said.

In the early morning of August 14, Gill, along with Jaspal and one Akashdeep Singh, went to the DC office. Gill and Jaspal went to the terrace and hoisted the Khalistan flag. Thereafter, they lowered the Indian flag and tore it into pieces. Akashdeep, who was standing outside the DC office, was capturing all of it on video, the DCP said.

They conveyed it to Rana on WhatsApp and sent all the videos to him.

After a couple of days, Akashdeep was arrested by the Moga police. Since then, they both were on the run. They were planning to go to Nepal and reach Pakistan for training but were apprehended, the police said, adding that the Punjab police has been informed.

## Yamuna river flowing close to warning mark: Official

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, AUG. 30

The Yamuna was flowing close to the warning mark in Delhi on Sunday morning, but the water level is receding gradually, officials said.

"The water level was recorded at 203.98 metres at the Old Railway Bridge at 9 am. It was 204.14 metres at 7 pm on Saturday and 204.41 metres at 5 pm on Friday," an official of the irrigation and flood control department said.

The warning level is 204.50 metres, and the danger mark is 205.33 metres.

Water was being released into the Yamuna at the rate of 4,353 cusec at 8 am from the Hathnikund barrage in Haryana's Yamunanagar district.

The flow rate was 11,445 cusec at 11 am on Saturday, the maximum in the last 24 hours. "The flow rate has remained between 4,000 cusec and 15,000 cusec over the last two days, which is not very high," he said.

One cusec is equivalent to 28.32 litre per second.

The water discharged from the barrage — which provides drinking water to Delhi — normally takes two-three days to reach the capital.

The water level rose on Friday due to rains in Delhi and neighbouring areas, he said.

The East Delhi district administration has also deployed 24 boats, each with two divers, to monitor the situation.

## Pak national held in Noida for violation of visa norms

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NOIDA, AUG. 30

A Pakistani woman has been arrested in Uttar Pradesh's Noida for allegedly violating visa rules, Gautam Buddh Nagar Police officials said on Sunday.

The 36-year-old woman, identified as Nausheen Naaz from Karachi in Pakistan, was held on Saturday. She was staying with her husband at their Ajmeri Gate home in Delhi on a long-term visa.

The couple had got married in 2005, the officials said. "The woman had entered Noida in violation of the rules of her long-term visa. She was in a bus which was intercepted for checking under a fly-over at Sector 14A of the city. She was arrested after

inspection," a police spokesperson said.

An FIR has been lodged against her at the Sector 20 police station under Section 14 of the Foreigners' Act, 1946, and further legal proceedings are underway in the case, he added.

According to officials, the woman's visa allowed her long-term stay in the country but not outside Delhi.

For travel anywhere outside the national capital she was required to have necessary permissions, they said.

On Saturday, she was on her way to Sector 137 of Noida for a picnic along with some relatives in the mini bus but got arrested soon after crossing over into the UP territory, the officials said.

## Facebook failed in tackling illegal content: Govindacharya tells HC

**New Delhi, Aug. 30:** Former RSS ideologue K.N. Govindacharya has told the Delhi high court that the presence of groups like 'bois locker room' indicate Facebook's "failure in tackling fake news, hate speech and illegal criminal content" on its social media platform.

The submission by Govindacharya has been made in his reply to Facebook's claims in the high court that it has put in place measures like community standards, third party fact checkers, reporting tools and artificial intelligence to detect and prevent the spread of inappropriate or objectionable content like hate speech and fake news.

In his rejoinder filed through advocate Virag Gupta, the former RSS ide-

ologue has said, "The presence of groups like bois locker room show the inaction and failure of the respondent (Facebook) in tackling fake news, hate speech and illegal criminal content on social media". The social media plat-

form had made the claims in its response to his PIL seeking directions to the Centre, Google, Facebook and Twitter to ensure removal of fake news and hate speech circulated on these three and other online platforms as well as disclosure of their designated officers in India. Mr Govindacharya has also moved an application, in his petition, seeking removal of illegal groups like 'bois locker room' from social media platforms for the safety and security of children in cyberspace.

Replying to the PIL and the application, Facebook had said it cannot remove any allegedly illegal group, like the 'bois locker room', from its platform as removal of such accounts or blocking access to them

## 30% Covid-19 patients from other states in city hospitals

Delhi records Aug.'s highest single-day spike of 2,024

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
with agency inputs  
NEW DELHI, AUG. 30

Around 30 per cent of the coronavirus patients admitted to Delhi hospitals in August were from other states, according to government data.

Non-residents also accounted for more than half the number of deaths reported in the national capital between August 3 and August 28, it showed.

Delhi recorded as many as 2,024 fresh coronavirus cases on Sunday, the city's highest single-day spike in August till date. With this the tally of coronavirus cases in the state has jumped over 1.73 lakh, while the death toll mounted to 4,426.

Twenty-two fatalities have been recorded in the last 24 hours, according to the latest bulletin issued by the Delhi health department. The national capital had recorded its previous highest spike of 1,954 fresh cases on August 29.

According to Delhi government's health bulletin, 6,881 RTPCR/CBNAAT/TrueNat tests were done

► **DELHI HEALTH** Minister Satyendar Jain said the recent increase in the number of Covid cases was due to various reasons, including patients from outside seeking treatment here, return of migrants who left Delhi during lockdown as well as increased testing

In the last 24 hours while 13,555 rapid antigen tests were conducted during the same time.

The bulletin said that the total number of cases stood at 1,73,390, while 1,54,171 patients have either recovered, been discharged or migrated out. The number of active cases stands at 14,793 and the number of containment zones at 820.

The AAP dispensation, in June, had predicted an exponential rise in the number of coronavirus cases in the national capital and decided to reserve beds in Delhi government-run hospitals only for city residents.

But, the decision was

overturned by Lt Governor Anil Bajjal.

Delhi health minister Satyendar Jain had on Friday said the recent increase in the number of Covid cases in Delhi was due to various reasons, including patients from outside seeking treatment here, return of migrants who left Delhi during lockdown as well as increased testing.

Government data shows that of the 8,577 Covid patients admitted to city hospitals in August, 2,536 belonged to other states — mostly from neighbouring Uttar Pradesh and Haryana.

For example, of the 120 non-residents admitted to Delhi hospitals on August 28, as many as 64 belonged to Uttar Pradesh, while 39 were from Haryana.

In private hospitals, the number of Covid patients from outside was more than those belonging to Delhi. Of the 98 patients admitted to BL Kapoor Hospital, 51 were from outside the city. Similarly, 111 out of 158 patients admitted to Apollo Hospital were not from Delhi.

## Noida: 107 cases push Covid count to 7,834

**Noida, Aug. 30:** Uttar Pradesh's Gautam Buddh Nagar on Sunday recorded 107 new Covid cases, pushing the district's infection tally to 7,834, official data showed.

The death toll in the district stood at 45 with a mortality rate of 0.57 per cent, slightly better from 0.58 per cent on Saturday, according to official statistics.

Meanwhile, 98 patients were discharged, it showed.

The recovery rate of patients improved slightly to 86.54 per cent from 86.45 per cent the previous day, as per the statistics.

The number of active cases climbed to 1,009 from 1,002, according to the data released by the UP Health Department for a 24-hour period.

So far, 6,780 patients

have recovered from Covid in Gautam Buddh Nagar, the third highest among districts in UP after Lucknow (19,342), and Kanpur Nagar (10,930), it showed.

The district remained at 14th position in the state in terms of active cases, the data showed.

The maximum active cases are in Lucknow (7,168), followed by Kanpur Nagar (3,180), Allahabad (2,935), Gorakhpur (2,551), Varanasi (1,778), Saharanpur (1,495), Aligarh (1,483), Bareilly (1,421), Moradabad (1,408), Ghaziabad (1,388), Ayodhya (1,122), Meerut (1,115) and Barabanki (1,081), according to the data.

There were 54,666 active cases across Uttar Pradesh on Sunday.

## Delhi's weekly markets can open for 7 more days

**New Delhi, Aug. 30:** The Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) on Sunday extended the functioning of weekly markets on a trial basis till September 6 in the national capital, officials said.

Last week, the Delhi Disaster Management Authority had allowed on a trial basis such markets to open, one market per day per municipal zone, in the city for one week from August 24-30.

The authorities have directed officials concerned to ensure strict implementation of Covid measures, including social distancing and mandatory use of face mask at these markets.

In an order issued on August 30, Acting chief secretary Satya Gopal said that after reviewing the current Covid situation, it was decided that one weekly market per day per zone will be allowed to function on a trial basis further for a week from August 31 to September 6.

Weekly markets have been permitted to function from 4 pm to 10 pm and not more than two buyers are allowed to deal at any stall at one time. Weekly markets in the city were closed since March 23.

Larger gatherings will continue to be prohibited and authorities concerned have appointed "Weekly Market Officer" to ensure strict compliance of the Standard Operating Procedure.

— PTI



People undergo thermal screening before entering the Jama Masjid during Muharram in New Delhi on Sunday.

— PTI

## Tiwari tunes into Mann Ki Baat from riot-hit Chand Bagh

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, AUG. 30

BJP MP Manoj Tiwari on Sunday tuned into Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Mann Ki Baat' radio programme at Chandbagh which was one of the hotspots of communal violence in northeast Delhi earlier this year, pledging to repair the "social division" in the area.

The former Delhi BJP president who represents northeast Delhi in the Lok Sabha said one incident does not make a place good or bad. "This is the same place which was maligned by the rioters. It was made to be known as a place of social division. We pledge to make this place known as bringing people together," he said on the occasion.

Mr Tiwari listened to 'Mann Ki Baat' at his new



Manoj Tiwari

office in Chandbagh along with party workers and locals.

He said he will hold 'Janta Darbar' at the office to address problems of the locals and promote social harmony in the area.

The Chandbagh area had witnessed widespread violence and arson, including the killing of an IB staffer, during the northeast Delhi riots that claimed over 50 lives and rendered scores other injured in the month of February this year.



## SHORT TAKES

## Producers urge govt to open cinema halls

**Mumbai:** Several Bollywood producers, actors along with the Multiplex Association of India (MAI) on Sunday urged the Centre to open the cinema halls, which have remained shut amid the coronavirus pandemic. The country went into lockdown from March 25 to contain the spread of coronavirus pandemic. The government started unlocking in phase-wise manner from June with opening up of domestic travel, offices, markets, shopping complexes, etc in non-containment zones. Amid rising Covid-19 cases in the country, under the government's Unlock 4 guidelines, cinema chains have not been given permission to operate. The official account of Multiplex Association of India tweeted under the hashtag "Support Movie Theatres" that the cinema industry is not only an inherent part of the country's culture, but also an integral part of the economy.

— PTI

## Doc rapes nurse in Telangana dist

**Hyderabad:** A doctor has allegedly raped a 28-year old nurse of a state-run hospital in Bhadrachalam district in Telangana, the police said on Sunday. In a complaint filed on Saturday, the nurse alleged the doctor, aged around 32 and working on contract basis at the hospital, raped her at her house on August 24, a police official said. The woman was also allegedly threatened and beaten up by the doctor, police said adding they have registered a case under relevant IPC sections against the doctor and investigations were on.

— PTI

## Rare butterfly sighted in Ch'garh

**Bhopal:** A rare species of butterfly has been sighted in a reserve forest in Chhattisgarh. Spotted angle butterfly, known as Caprona agama in zoological terms, has been spotted in Bhamardeo reserve forest in Kawardha district by a survey team of Chhattisgarh forest department. "The rare butterfly species has been sighted in Bhamardeo reserve forest", local divisional forest officer (DFO) Dilraj Prabhakar said. In fact, this was the first time the species has been found in Central India. "Based on published research literature, the species is reported for the first time in Central India in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. The species of butterfly is sighted rarely in India", researcher Dr Rajendra Gupta told this newspaper on Sunday.

## ASI killed...

■ **Continued from Page 1** and then ran into a nearby residential area, that was quickly encircled by reinforcements including those from the Army's 20 Rashtriya Rifles. "It was a weapon snatching bid that was foiled by alert security personnel, forcing the terrorists to leave their motorbike behind and run away. However, they were chased by our men till they took shelter in a private house in a nearby area known as Dhobi Mohalla," the police chief said.

In the initial exchange of fire, ASI Singh was critically injured. He was quickly evacuated to the 92 Base Hospital at nearby Badami Bagh cantonment, where he succumbed to his injuries earlier Sunday. One militant was also killed on Saturday night itself.

The officials said the operation against the two other holed-up militants, halted due to darkness to avoid collateral damage, was resumed at first light on Sunday and soon the duo too was "neutralised."

## Covid cases

■ **Continued from Page 1** fatalities are one of the lowest compared to global averages. Of 25.20 million cases across the globe, over 8.47 lakh people have died so far.

Of the fresh deaths in the last 24 hours, 328 are from Maharashtra, 115 from Karnataka, 87 from Tamil Nadu, 82 from Andhra Pradesh, 62 from Uttar Pradesh, 53 from West Bengal, 41 from Punjab, 22 each from Delhi and Madhya Pradesh, 16 from Jharkhand, 14 from Odisha, 13 each from Gujarat and Rajasthan, 12 from Puducherry and 11 each from Chhattisgarh and Uttarakhand.



Family members make a rangoli with flower petals on the occasion of Uthradam at Kizhakkum Muri in Kozhikode, Kerala, on Sunday.

— PTI

## Govt must not run airlines, says Puri

**New Delhi, Aug. 30:** The government should not be running airports and airlines, civil aviation minister Hardeep Singh Puri said on Sunday, adding that he hopes to privatise Air India during 2020.

His remarks came at a time when the Kerala government has opposed the Union Cabinet's approval on August 19 to lease out the Thiruvananthapuram airport to Adani Enterprises under the public-private partnership (PPP) model for a period of 50 years.

Addressing a virtual meet on Nammo app, Puri



Hardeep Singh Puri

said, "I can tell you from my heart the government should not be running airports and the government should not be running airlines."

The Centre-run Airports Authority of India (AAI) owns and manages more than 100 airports, includ-

ing the one in Kerala's capital city.

On Air India's privatisation, Mr Puri said, "As a going concern, one that is attractive to potential bidders, we should privatise it (Air India). And I am hopeful that we will be able to complete that privatisation process during this year."

Last Tuesday, the Central government extended by two months the deadline for placing bids for Air India till October 30 as the COVID-19 fallout has disrupted economic activity globally. The process of stake sale

in the national carrier was initiated on January 27. This is the fourth extension given by the government for putting in bids.

"If the government runs an airport or an airline, then they have to follow the government rules like L1 and L2, and that is not how commercial entities can run," Puri said.

When the government issues a tender, the lowest bidder deemed as L1 is the winner. Mr Puri said he expects that the domestic air traffic would reach pre-COVID levels by the end of this year.

— PTI

## All depts asked to review service records

## Centre starts process to weed out corrupt babus

**New Delhi, Aug. 30:** The Centre has asked all its departments to review service records of employees who have completed 30 years in job to identify inefficient or corrupt staff and retire them prematurely in public interest, according to a Personnel Ministry order.

The employees' performance review is conducted under the Fundamental Rule (FR) 56 (J) and 56 (I), and also under Rule 48 (1) (b) of the Central Civil Services (Pension) Rules, 1972, that gives "absolute right" to the appropriate authority to retire a government servant, "if it is necessary to do so in public interest".

It is clarified that premature retirement of government servants under these rules is not a penalty. It is distinct from 'compulsory retirement', which is one of prescribed

penalties under Central Civil Services (Classification, Control and Appeal) Rules, 1965," said the order issued on Friday.

The government may, at any time after a government servant has attained the age of 50/55 years or completed 30 years of service, as the case may be, retire him/her prematurely in public interest, it said.

Instructions have been issued from time to time for undertaking periodic review of performance of government servants with a view to ascertain whether they should be

retained in service or retired prematurely, the ministry said.

The latest order has been issued in order to bring in better clarity to the existing instructions and enable uniform implementation, said the personnel ministry

An effort has been made to review, consolidate and reiterate the guidelines so far issued on the subject at one place, the ministry said in the order issued to the secretaries of all Central government departments.

Giving details on applicability of FR 56 (J), the order said the service record of a group A and B category officer can be reviewed if he/she has attained the age of 50 years (in case of joining service before 35 years of age) or after attaining 55 years (in case of joining service after 35 years of age).

— PTI

## 'Will control Covid-19 by Diwali time'

**Bengaluru, Aug. 30:** Union health minister Dr Harsh Vardhan on Sunday expressed hope that we should have "very significant control" over Covid-19 by Diwali.

"...hopefully that in the next couple of months, maybe by Diwali time, we should have a very significant control over the coronavirus," Dr Vardhan said.

Addressing the Nation First webinar series organised by Ananthkumar Foundation, he said experts like Dr Devi Prasad Shetty and Dr C.N. Manjath will probably agree that after

about, more cautious about our lifestyle..." he added. Dr Vardhan also expressed hope about having a vaccine against COVID-19 by the end of this year.

"We are not lagging behind anyone else in the whole world in our efforts to contribute towards the vaccine against COVID..." In India we have about 7-8 vaccine candidates, three of them in the clinical trial phases and rest in the pre-clinical trials and by the end of this year we hope to be able to get a vaccine against COVID," he said.

The Minister said there

was only one lab in February which has now increased to 1,583 nationwide, and out of this more than 1,000 are government labs. The country is conducting about 1 million tests per day which is way ahead of the target, he said.

Noting that there is no more scarcity of PPE kits, ventilators and N95 masks in the country, Vardhan further said everyday five lakh PPE kits are produced in the country, while 10 manufacturers are producing N95 masks, and 25 producers are manufacturing ventilators.

— PTI

## Mourners defy curbs in Kashmir, 16 injured

**YUSUF JAMEEL**  
SRINAGAR, AUG. 30

Shia mourners in large numbers on Sunday defied curfew-like restrictions at several places across Kashmir Valley including central towns of Budgam and Magam and Srinagar's Zadibal area by taking out tazia and zul-janah processions to commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Hussain, the grandson of Islam's Prophet Muhammad, and his 71 family members and companions in the 'Battle of Karbala' (Iraq) in October 680.

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

In Budgam, a predominantly Shia town located 27-km west of Srinagar, thousands of mourners participated in the 'zul-janah' procession.

Similar processions were taken out also in some other parts of Kashmir whereas elsewhere in the Valley only

tazia or mourning processions and rallies without the participation of 'zul-janah' replicas were organized by the mourners.

At Zadibal in the heart of Srinagar City, the police fired pellet shotguns and also lobbed teargas to disperse the mourners who took to the streets in their attempt to take out a tazia procession and clashed with the former when it came in their way. Reports said that 16 persons were injured, most of them receiving multiple pellet entrance wounds. The police detained about twenty people for violating the restrictions in force in many parts of the City since Friday to hold back Muharram processions and rallies in view of Covid-19. The witnesses said that as the number of the mourners out on the streets at Zadibal swelled, the police and other security forces withdrew from the area and monitored the situation from distances.

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

## JCO killed in sniper hit near LoC

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
SRINAGAR, AUG. 30

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

The Army sources identified the slain Naib Subedar (JCO) as Rajvinder Singh of 1 Sikh Regiment. The sources said that though the exact cause of the fatality is not known it could be a sniper attack, a ceasefire violation or a sneak attack by infiltrators. "There could be some other reason behind this killing. We're investigating and trying to ascertain how actually he was killed," the sources said. An earlier report had said that the facing armies traded small arms fire in Kalsiyani and Jhangar areas of Nowshera.

## Ex-PM Rao 'true jewel' of India, says Tharoor

**Hyderabad, Aug. 30:** The P.V. Narasimha Rao government was successful in maintaining good relations with neighbouring countries through reasonable, conciliatory and accommodative approach while the present BJP dispensation has "failed" in the area, Congress MP Shashi Tharoor claimed on Sunday.

Delivering a talk on "India's Foreign Policy — Former Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao", organised by the Congress' Telangana unit, he also described the late leader as a "true jewel of India" and pitched for conferring Bharat Ratna posthumously on him.

He was addressing through video conferencing the event held as part of the year-long birth centenary celebrations of Rao, who hailed from Telangana, by the Congress.

He further said in one of India's most difficult periods in 1991, India was blessed with an extraordinary statesman and a visionary leader in Rao, who according to him changed the country's fortunes.

— PTI



Salman Khurshid

**ASIM KAMAL**  
NEW DELHI, AUG. 30

Asserting that there was no urgency to have an elected Congress president, senior leader Salman Khurshid on Sunday said he "can't see the heavens falling" for the need of a party chief as Sonia Gandhi was still at the helm and should be the one to decide on the leadership issue.

Mr Khurshid, a former Union minister and among the leaders considered close to the Gandhi family, told PTI in an interview that he would not have signed the letter even if he was approached by the group that wrote to Gandhi seeking urgent organisational overhaul, including an active and full-time leadership.

On Ghulam Nabi Azad, the most vocal among the 23 letter writers, seeking organisational elections to ensure that the Congress does not remain out of power for decades, Khurshid said the senior leader from Jammu and Kashmir had been part of the top echelons of the

party for years when there has been no such elections and still the party prospered.

He said probably Mr Azad wanted a change now in what the party has been doing over the years and expressed confidence that the leadership will give a thought to what he is saying as he is a senior leader.

Mr Khurshid said the leaders who have written to Sonia Gandhi always had access to her and could have approached her rather than writing to her. "It is very clear that the important persons in this letter do belong to the top echelons of our party and therefore Mrs Gandhi has indicated that it was best that they could have discussed it within the confines of the party," he said.

— PTI

## Pondy minister cleans toilet in Covid hospital

**Puducherry, Aug. 30:** Puducherry health minister Malladi Krishna Rao took it upon himself the task of cleaning a toilet in a government-run hospital here after complaints about its poor maintenance came to fore.

The minister who has been at the forefront in the fight against Covid-19 in the union territory had received complaints from relatives of COVID-19 patients that toilets in the Indira Gandhi Government Medical College (IGMC) hospital in Kadirakam were not

clean. During his visit to the hospital accompanied by teams of Health department officials on Saturday, he saw for himself the poor maintenance and swung into action. The minister wore personal protective equipment while doing the cleaning work. He asked the sanitary workers to keep the premises clean. Seeing the Minister taking up cleaning work, one of the sanitary workers rushed towards him and requested him to hand over the brush to her.

— PTI

## Army dogs help detect IEDs, track militants

**PAWAN BALI**  
NEW DELHI, AUG. 30

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



instances in the past one year, where army dogs have helped in recovery of individuals or mortal remains of persons struck



BJP supporters wearing Prime Minister Narendra Modi masks listen to his radio programme Mann Ki Baat in Kolkata on Sunday.

— PTI



## SHORT TAKES

## 109 fresh Covid cases in Himachal

**Shimla:** Himachal Pradesh recorded 109 fresh Covid-19 cases on Sunday, taking the infection tally to 5,891, while the death toll reached 34 with one more fatality, an official said. The number of active cases in the state now stands at 1,517, additional chief secretary (health) R.D. Dhiman said. A 63-year-old woman in Hamirpur's Badsar succumbed to the disease at Tanda medical college, Kangra chief medical officer Dr. Gurdarshan Gupta said. Kangra accounts for eight of the total Covid-19 deaths in the state, followed by Mandi and Solan (seven each), Hamirpur and Chamba (four each), Shimla (two), and Una and Sirmaur (one each). — PTI

## Sakshi Maharaj freed from isolation

**Giridih, Jharkhand:** The Jharkhand government on Sunday released BJP MP Sakshi Maharaj within 24 hours of placing him under home quarantine for allegedly violating Covid-19 protocols, officials said. The MP from Unnao seat in Uttar Pradesh was "forcibly" placed under 14-day home quarantine at Shanti Bhavan Ashram here for allegedly not intimating the state administration about his arrival to the district to take part in a programme. The state government had "come under pressure" to release him from home quarantine, official sources said. "The MP had tested negative for Covid-19 on Saturday. He was released from quarantine as per the state government's orders. He is free to go anywhere he wants," Giridih deputy commissioner R.K. Sinha said. — PTI

## J&amp;K sees highest single-day spike

**Srinagar:** Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday recorded its highest single-day spike of 786 coronavirus cases, taking the total number of infected people to 37,163, even as nine fresh deaths were reported, officials said. They said of the new cases, 354 were from the Jammu region, and 432 from the Kashmir valley. This has taken the total number of infected people to 37,163, they said, adding there are 7,959 active cases, while 28,510 patients have recovered. Jammu district reported the highest number of 258 new cases, followed by 161 in Srinagar district, the officials said. Meanwhile, nine people infected with coronavirus have died in Jammu and Kashmir in the 24 hours till 5:00 pm on Sunday. — PTI

## Police station shut as cops have Covid

**Ambala:** The Mullana police station in Haryana's Ambala was temporarily closed as eight cops tested positive for coronavirus, an official said on Sunday. The official said most of the police station staff was deployed on field duty. As mild symptoms of the infection were detected in some of the constables, the entire police station staff was tested for the virus. Eight of them were found coronavirus positive after their reports came on Saturday, the official said. The entire police station has been sanitised. Mullana DSP Rajneesh Kumar said the police station has been temporarily closed as most of the staff members went into quarantine. Local residents have been urged to lodge their complaints online. However, two constables have been deployed outside the police station to hear grievances of the general public. — PTI

## Cop 'missing', Naxal hand suspected

**Bijapur, Chhattisgarh:** A police official went missing on Sunday while he was travelling to his native village in Naxal-hit Bijapur district in Chhattisgarh, police said. Police suspect that assistant sub inspector (ASI) Nagaiyya Korsa might have been abducted by ultras, an official said, adding that they are investigating various possible angles. Korsa had left Kuru police station in the district, where he was posted, this morning after taking leave, saying he was going home, the official said. When the ASI's family members could not contact him for a long time, they informed his colleagues, following which a search was launched to trace him, he said. — PTI

■ 8,000 rescued, rains damage standing crops

## 5 lakh affected by MP flash floods, 7 killed

**RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY**  
BHOPAL, AUG. 30

Nearly five lakh people in 411 villages under 12 districts in Madhya Pradesh have been affected by flash floods in various rivers in the state caused by torrential rains in the last 72 hours. At least seven persons were killed in rain-related incidents in the state in the last 24 hours.

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

Similarly, two girls, aged nine and 14, drowned in an undated field while grazing goats in Pareih village in Chhatrapur district on Saturday evening. A girl, aged 13, was killed when the walls of her house collapsed in Sehore on Sunday.

"As many as 411 villages in 12 districts in the state have been affected by floods. Around 8,000 people have been rescued by Indian Air Force choppers so far. Army and State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) have been deployed in rescue and relief operations in flood-affected areas", chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan who conducted aerial survey of the flood-hit areas in the state for the second day on Sunday said.

Mr Chouhan briefed Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the flood situa-

## Large parts of Odisha come under flood fury, 16 killed

**AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO**  
BHUBANESWAR, AUG. 30

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

The high flood in Odisha, according to official sources, had by Sunday evening destroyed at least 8 lakh hectares of farmland and left as many as 16 people dead.

According to Jyotirmaya Rath, the chief engineer of the state water resources department, as many as 24 breaches happened in the Brahmani river system, while Mahanadi system reported two.

The remaining breaches occurred in Kharasrota,

Jalaka and Baitarani river systems.

According to state Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) Pradeep Kumar Jena, Bari and Dasarath block areas in Jajpur district were severely hit with thousands of hectares of standing crop getting washed away in the gushing floods of Brahmani, Baitarani and Kharasrota rivers.

The SRC said a little over 10 lakh cusecs of water was flowing in the Mahanadi river system and submergence of low-lying areas in coastal Odisha districts like Kendrapara, Jajpur, Jagatsinghpur, Khurda and Puri were apprehended.

According to the SRC, the flood situation in three rivers Subarnarekha, Budhabalanga and Baitarani — is improving and the water level is now below the danger mark.

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

Reports reaching from various parts of the state said the torrential rains

► **TWO GIRLS**, aged nine and 14, drowned in an inundated field in Pareih village in Chhatrapur district on Saturday evening. A girl, aged 13, was killed when the walls of her house collapsed in Sehore on Sunday.

have caused damage to properties and standing crops in many flood-hit areas in the state.

## MANN KI BAAT ADDRESS

## ‘Students didn’t want khilone pe charcha’

**New Delhi, Aug. 30:** Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday said that the students wanted Prime Minister Narendra Modi to address the issue of NEET and JEE exams in his monthly radio programme, but he spoke on toys.

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

Using the hashtag



Rahul Gandhi

"Mann Ki Nahi Students Ki Baat", Rahul Gandhi tweeted, "JEE-NEET aspirants wanted the PM to do 'Pariksha Pe Charcha' but the PM did 'Khilone Pe

Charcha'."

Rahul Gandhi and his Congress party have supported a demand by a section to postpone the NEET and JEE examinations, which are starting from September 1, in view of the Covid pandemic.

Six state governments through their ministers have also moved the Supreme Court with a review petition seeking postponement of these exams.

In yet another push to his 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' campaign to make India self-reliant, Prime

Minister Modi on Sunday urged the startups to develop computer games in and based on India, citing the nation's rich heritage and traditions that can drive innovations in the toy and gaming industry.

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

## New education policy is 'student-centric': Mantri

**AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO**  
BHUBANESWAR, AUG. 30

Union minister of education Dr Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank on Sunday said the new National Education Policy 2020 is a "student-centric" policy and reflects dreams and aspirations of the people as it has been framed following wide-ranging consultations.

"Provisions for early childhood education, emphasis on mother-tongue based early childhood education; focus on skills, credit bank and multiple entry and exits are some of the important student-centric features of the policy," the minister said while inaugurating an international webinar on National Education Policy



Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank

(NEP) 2020, organised by KIIT Deemed to be University, Odisha.

Terming NEP 2020 as a "game changing policy", Professor Anil D Sahasrabudhe, chairman of All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) suggested a single data system for institutions for regulatory reporting and accreditations.

Throwing light on vision of the new policy, Professor

## BJP: Role of MVA should be probed in Sushant case

**SONU SHRIVASTAVA**  
MUMBAI, AUG. 30

The Maharashtra Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader and legislator Atul Bhatalkar on Sunday demanded that the role of ruling party leaders and a minister in connection with the death of Sushant Singh Rajput case needs to be probed by the CBI. Mr Bhatalkar wrote a letter to Union home minister Amit Shah seeking a CBI probe into the home

department. The BJP leader claimed that they have all the information regarding this. Meanwhile, the Congress party again targeted the BJP over its connection with Sandeep Singh raising a question over the turnover of the latter's company, which was invited to sign MoU worth ₹177 crore in 2019. The Congress has also claimed to have financial statements of the company.

## Narmada in spate in Hosangabad district of MP



Aerial view of flood-affected areas of Hosangabad district of Madhya Pradesh on Sunday. Seven people have been so far killed in rain-related incidents in the state. — PTI

## Many aspirants to miss NEET-JEE exams

**New Delhi, Aug. 30:** Despite being fully prepared to take the NEET exam scheduled to be held next month, Inzamam Ali will most likely miss it due to the flood situation in his home state Bihar.

Ali is among the lakhs of NEET aspirants and wants the highly competitive medical entrance exam to be postponed.

"I am from Gopalganj district in Bihar and my area has been flooded for the last one-and-a-half months. The roads are broken and there are power cuts. I don't think I will be able to take the exam," he said.

Ali said he inquired from a private transporter about taking him to Patna, where his exam centre is located, but he

would charge ₹10,000 for a one-side journey.

"It means that I will end up spending ₹20,000 just for taking the exam. My father is a farmer and he won't be able to afford this much," a dismayed Ali said.

He said he has taken coaching at Kota for the NEET exam but might not be able to fulfil his dream this year.

"There are 50 other NEET aspirants in my area and all of them are facing the same issues. We have also been facing power cuts for 10 to 15 days at a stretch. It means that we are only able to study during the day and not at night. Our only request is to postpone the exams," he said.

Shree Chandana, a NEET aspirant from

Kerala, is in quarantine after coming in contact with her neighbour who tested positive for coronavirus. Her area is a containment zone with severe restrictions in place.

"I dropped two years to prepare for the NEET exam and it seems that this year, I won't be able to take the exam. There is no transport facility that I can use for reaching my exam centre, which is 60 kilometres away," she said.

Chandana said she lives with her aged grandparents and is scared for them due to the pandemic.

"We have seen that the SOPs regarding coronavirus have not been followed in state entrance exams where thousands of students took the exam. How are they going

to ensure that SOPs will be followed in exams where lakhs of students will be appearing," she asked.

Advait DS, one of the petitioners in the Supreme Court seeking postponement of the medical and engineering exams amid a spurt in the number of COVID-19 cases, said he had been receiving hundreds of calls from NEET and JEE aspirants sharing their woes. The petition was dismissed by the apex court.

"There are students who are stuck in floods, who do not have transport facilities and then there are also a couple of students who called up that they are taking care of their father or mother who contracted the virus. — PTI

## Prashant Kishor's I-PAC fails to woo ex-CPM MLA

**RAJIB CHOWDHURI**  
KOLKATA, AUG. 30

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

Eying the Communists with clean image, the I-PAC last week contacted former state information technology (IT) minister Debesh Das in a bid to rope him in the chief minister Mamata Banerjee's party. But its attempt failed as the former CPI(M) MLA of Entally in central Kolkata outright rejected the offer.

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

According to the CPI(M) sources, two leaders of the party in North Bengal were approached before Mr Das by the I-PAC. They were two-time former MLA of Dhupguri Lakshmikanta Roy and ex Jalpaiguri MP Mahendra Kumar Roy. Both however



Prashant Kishor

► **EYEING THE** Communists with clean image, the I-PAC last week contacted former state IT minister Debesh Das in a bid to rope him into Trinamul. But its attempt failed as the former CPI(M) MLA of Entally in central Kolkata outright rejected the offer.

rejected the offers. The three refusals left the ruling party in a spot. Neither the I-PAC nor the TMC was available for comments.

Known for his clean image and soft spoken nature Mr Das, who was a professor of Jadavpur University, was not only a three-time CPI(M) MLA during the Left rule in the state but also served as the IT minister in chief minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee's cabinet till 2011. He however lost to Swarnakamal Saha for the TMC in 2011 when Ms Banerjee came to power for the first time.

## CBI may conduct narco tests on Rhea

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 30

Not satisfied with the replies given by Rhea Chakraborty and her brother Showik Chakraborty, the CBI is now contemplating conducting "narco analysis" and "brain mapping" tests on them as part of its investigation into the Sushant Singh death case.

Sources said: "Investigators are not satisfied with the statements of Rhea Chakraborty and her brother. Although they have been questioned several times, their replies



Rhea Chakraborty

are not convincing". Now CBI sleuths are contemplating conducting brain-mapping and narco-analysis tests on them, sources said adding the scientific tests may provide certain

leads to investigators. The CBI took over the Sushant Singh Rajput death case after the Supreme Court's order on August 19. The actor was found hanging at his Mumbai home on June 14.

Sources further clarified: "The agency will first need to seek the consent of the both as legal provisions entail that such a test can not be conducted without their permission". Besides, agency will also have to take permission from the competent court for conducting these tests on them, sources said.

The brain-mapping test is done to interpret the behaviour of the suspect and corroborate the investigating officer's observation and the suspect's statements, sources said adding during the tests, forensic experts apply unique technologies to find out if a suspect's brain recognises things from the crime scene that an innocent suspect would have no knowledge of. During the test, the accused is first interrogated to find out whether he or she is concealing any information, they added.



# THE ASIAN AGE

31 AUGUST 2020

## In guise of Covid war, it's unbridled hate

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

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

**Last week's violence testifies to the uncommon zeal that the government brought to the fighting of Covid-19 by cracking down with unqualified force on the small Muharram processions**

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

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

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

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

## The show must go on

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

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

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

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

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Kishwar  
Desai

London Diary



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

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

Another lot of demonstrators are

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

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

The latest data show a sharp upsurge in new cases, highest since June and in four figures. Whether this will stay next month or is just a blip is anyone's guess. September is crucial because schools reopen. There has been a battle going on between the government, which

wants schools to open, and the teachers' union, which is asking for guarantees about safety. The Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, keeps changing his mind — but now it seems he has decided to follow the practice in Scotland where a sensible compromise is being worked out about masks and distancing and bubbles.

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

This is the season for the Proms. It is a high point in the transition between summer

and autumn. It is a musical feast in the splendid location of the Royal Albert Hall. Day after day famous composers and singers and soloists perform divine music, which is broadcast on the BBC which sponsors the programme. If you want a seat you have to wrangle it from those who have bought seats permanently but may let you have it for a night for a hefty price. If not, you stand at the back as part of the promenade. On the final day of the Proms, the climax comes with the playing of Land of Hope and Glory and, of course, Rule Britannia with many standing at the back waving Union Jacks and singing a raucous chorus. All around the country people gather in open places and parks and gardens and sing along with those in the Royal Albert Hall. This has led to some light-hearted displays of patriotism. But now it seems BBC is not sure it is culturally appropriate to celebrate the past as it is associated with Empire and slavery. The culture war, which has been going on since Black Lives Matter erupted four months ago, has still not abated. So the BBC has proposed that the

music will be played but no singing of the lyrics.

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

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

Subhani



## The centrality of dissent



Manish Tewari

State of the Union

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

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

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

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

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

The free society they struggled to create, even as it seems to borrow from the language of a more recent West, actually owes its deepest debt to our own ancient impulses. The conviction that free citizens, thinking citizens, ques-

tioning citizens, lie at the root of the good society. The finest rajan is not the unquestioned master of the people. The finest rajan is the embodiment of a questioning people.

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

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

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

But the tsunami of change was beyond being bottled anymore. The next few hundred years would see more change than the millennia and a half before. The fruit of human inquiry would flower. Technology in the shape of the printing press would spread dissident ideas

rapidly and spark fresh questioning and reform movements. It would hasten the end of Europe's Dark Ages.

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

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

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

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

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

time both schools of thought and governance collapsed, having inflicted untold suffering on innocent millions.

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

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

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

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

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

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

### LETTERS

#### SOVEREIGN DEFAULT

The two options for Goods and Services Tax compensation mooted by the Centre at the 41st GST Council meeting last week and blaming God for the economic slump has come in for major flak. Kerala has asked the Centre to take a loan and provide compensation to states while Punjab has termed the Centre's act of throwing up its hands as a sovereign default. Maharashtra deputy CM Ajit Pawar insisted for pro-active measures to help tide over the slump. The Centre's efforts to sweeten the deal would do little to calm frayed nerves.

N.J. Ravi Chander  
Bengaluru

#### PRINT RESTRAINT

THIS REFERS TO the report “CBI quizzes Rhea for 2nd day in row” (Aug. 30). How the 24x7 news channels have lost their sense of proportion is clear from their reporting of the Sushant Singh Rajput case. A prominent Hindi news channel, which makes tall claims of being No. 1, is reporting the CBI team's inquiry into the case like a ball-to-ball running commentary of a cricket match. The print media, by contrast, has shown maturity and restraint. Placing the news related to the case at the bottom of page 4 is appreciated.

M.C. Joshi  
Lucknow

#### METRO GAMBLE

THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT'S decision to open the Metro railway is fraught with grave risks as restrictions regarding social distancing are very difficult to observe. The Metro is already overcrowded and keeping distance by riders will be very difficult task. The state government and the Centre have so far had a poor record in terms of checking violations. It is hoped that the various authorities will act strictly as failure will lead to a spiralling of cases. The saving grace is that cinemas, entertainment parks, theatres and swimming pools will continue to be out of bounds for people.

D.B. Madan  
New Delhi

₹500 for the best letter of the week goes to Arun Malankar (Aug. 24). Email: asianage.letters@gmail.com.



## IN BRIEF

### Israeli tanks hit Hamas targets

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

### Death toll in China mishap rises to 29

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

### Top French military officer arrested

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

### HEZBOLLAH CHIEF SAYS OPEN TO NEW LEBANON PACT

**Beirut, Aug. 30:** Hezbollah chief Hasan Nasrallah on Sunday said that his Shiite movement is "open" to a French proposal for a new political pact for Lebanon as long as there is national consensus. "On his latest visit to Lebanon, we heard a call from the French president for a new political pact in Lebanon... today we are open to a constructive discussion in this regard," Nasrallah said in a speech. "But we have one condition: this discussion should be carried out... with the will and consent of the various Lebanese factions." Nasrallah did not elaborate on what kind of changes his movement was willing to consider but cited criticism from "official French sources" over Lebanon's "sect-based political system and its inability to solve Lebanon's problems and respond to its needs." Lebanon recognises 18 official religious sects and its 128 parliamentary seats are divided equally between Muslims and Christians, an arrangement unique in the region. However, governments born out of this system have been prone to deadlock and have failed to meet popular demands for better living conditions. Macron, the first world leader to visit Lebanon after the devastating August 4 Beirut port blast, will return on Monday to press for reform and reconstruction. On his earlier visit days after the blast, the French president said Lebanese leaders had a "huge" responsibility: "that of a revamped pact with the Lebanese people in the coming weeks, that of deep change."

## Trump supporters, protesters clash in Portland, 1 killed

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

The Oregon city has been an epicenter of BLM protests since the police killing of unarmed black man George Floyd in Minnesota in late May, and according to local media a "caravan of hundreds of cars" of Trump supporters also converged there on Saturday. Portland Police tweeted a political rally was "caravanning" throughout downtown Portland, adding: "There have been some instances of violence between demonstrators and counter demonstrators. Officers have intervened and in some cases made arrests." OregonLive reported "clashes" and "tense moments" between the groups, although police did not say whether the shooting was related to the demonstrations.

The shooting occurred at around 8:45pm downtown, police said later in a statement, adding a homicide investigation was under way. "Portland Police officers heard sounds of gunfire from the area of Southeast 3rd Avenue and Southwest Alder Street," the statement said. — AFP

### TRUMP TO VISIT KENOSHA IN WAKE OF RACIAL UNREST

**Washington, Aug. 30:** President Donald Trump will travel next week to the Midwestern city where African American Jacob Blake was shot multiple times in the back by a white policeman, sparking a nationwide wave of protest, the White House said. Trump will meet police in Kenosha, Wisconsin on Tuesday and "survey damage from recent riots" triggered by Blake's shooting last weekend, administration spokesman Judd Deere said. Blake took at least half a dozen shots in the back in front of his small children as he tried to get into a car, in an incident that triggered an outpouring of anger over yet another shooting of a black man by white police.

Deere did not say if Trump would meet the family of Blake, who was left paralyzed from the waist down. Protesters have taken to the streets nationwide this summer over the killing of black men by police, including George Floyd in Minneapolis in May. Trump has characterised the mostly-peaceful activists as vicious rioters as he presses a law and order message while fighting an uphill battle for re-election in November. — AFP

### BEN CRUMP, ADVOCATE FOR VICTIMS

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

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

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



Ashraf Ghani

### AFGHAN PREZ NAMES COUNCIL FOR PEACE DEAL

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

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

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

The council is separate from a 21-member negotiating team, which Ghani appointed in March and which is expected to travel to the Gulf Arab state of Qatar, where the Taliban maintain a political office, for intra-Afghan talks. The council will have the final say and will ultimately decide on the points that the negotiating team takes up with the Taliban. — AP

# Protesters storm Reichstag during mass Covid protest

Around 300 people were arrested in scuffles with police

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

— AFP

police.

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

Police initially appeared overwhelmed, as only a

handful of officers were there to block the crowd.

"We cannot be present everywhere and it is precisely these weaknesses in the deployment that were exploited, in this case to cross the security barriers

in order to reach the steps of the Reichstag," said local police spokesman Thilo Cablitz.

The Reichstag, where German deputies meet, has a powerful symbolic role in the country. The

building, with its famous dome, was burnt down by the Nazis in 1933 in an act aimed at destroying what remained of German democracy between the two world wars.

— AFP

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

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

The page for the Kenosha Guard violated Facebook's policies and had been flagged by a bunch of people, Zuckerberg said in a video posted on Friday on Facebook. The social media giant has in recent

weeks adopted new guidelines removing or restricting posts from groups that pose a threat to public safety.

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

It was largely an operational mistake, Zuckerberg said. The contractors, the reviewers, who the initial complaints were fun-

neled to, didn't, basically didn't pick this up.

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

Facebook is now taking down posts that praise the shooting or shooter, Zuckerberg said. Yet a report on Thursday by The Guardian newspaper found examples of sup-

port and even fundraising messages still being shared on Facebook and its photo-sharing service, Instagram.

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



Joe Biden

### BIDEN: WON'T USE MILITARY AS 'PROP'

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

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

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

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

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

## Mass rally against Belarus leader

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

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

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

Some protesters gathered around Lukashenko's official residence in the centre of Minsk, the Palace of Independence, which was guarded by a cordon of

riot police and special forces with helmets and anti-riot shields, equipped with water cannons. Sunday's rally fell on Lukashenko's 66th birthday and online opposition messages urged people to bring flowers and "creative" handmade gifts reflecting their attitude to the authoritarian leader.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Brazil's curve "has sta-

## Shias mark Ashura in Iraq's amid virus

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

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

Typically, millions of

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

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

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

8,43,000 people have died of Covid-19 globally, and with no vaccine or effective treatment available yet, governments have been forced to resort to some form of social distancing and lockdowns to stop the spread of the virus. — AFP

### SAD | DEMISE

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

## Famous author Randall Kenan dies at 57

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

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

A cause was not immediately available, Daniel Wallace, his friend and colleague at the university,

said Kenan was found dead Friday at his home in Hillsborough, near Chapel Hill.

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

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



Randall Kenan

would visit the couple. Kenan grew up in North

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

Carolina and attended UNC, receiving his under-

graduate degree in 1985.

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

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

Earlier this month, Kenan wrote an open letter reflecting on his expe-

rience as a Black student at UNC in the '80s, and the changes prompted by civil unrest, demands for racial justice and the removal of Confederate statues across the South.

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



quick BITES

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

\* As of Friday/Saturday

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

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

FM to meet bankers on loan recast on Sept. 3



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

Fiscal deficit to touch 7% in FY21: Brickwork

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

Private firms begin investing in farm sector: Secy

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

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

August FPI inflow hits five-year high

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, AUG. 30

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

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

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

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

FPIs cornered a lion's share of ICICI Bank's QIP;



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

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

tic mutual funds and insurance companies."

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

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

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

BANKS TOLD TO REFUND UPI, RUPAY TRANSACTION CHARGES

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

BHIM-UPI.

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), in a circular on 'imposition of charge on the prescribed electronic modes under section 268SU of I-T Act', also advised banks not to

impose any charges on any future transactions made through these modes.

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

Biyani gives up after wrestling with debt

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

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

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

Many a time he has been forced to divest assets to pare mounting debt of his



Kishore Biyani

retail empire, a business which is always considered cash consuming.

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

Again in 2012, Biyani had also sold a majority stake in Future Capital Holdings to US-based pri-

vate equity Warburg Pincus to raise funds and exited from a stationery joint venture with US-based Staples by selling its entire stake to the partner.

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

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

In August last year Biyani had sold 49 per cent stake in Future Coupons to Amazon.com NV Investment Holdings. According to some reports, the debt of Future Group has now reached around Rs 13,000 crore and most shares of the promoter's group are pledged.

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

Consumers opting for essentials, not luxury: Nestle

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

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

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

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

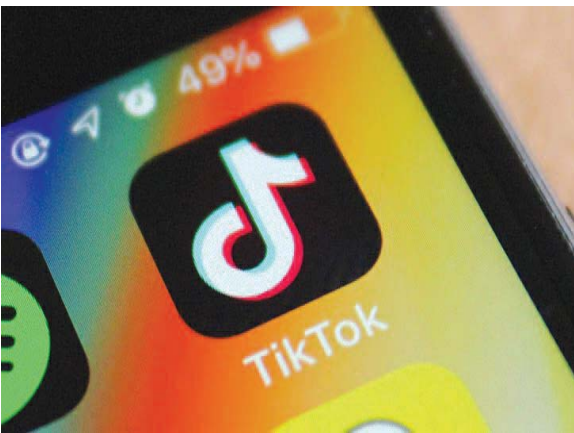
China throws spanner in Trump's TikTok works

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

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

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

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



billion.

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

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

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

The revised rules would cover cross-border transfers of restricted technologies even within the same company, while the impact and consequences of failing to make appropriate

applications would be very different if an international business is spun off, Cui said separately in an interview with Bloomberg.

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

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

Apparel retailers could see demand rebound in Q4

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, AUG. 30

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

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

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



Sales in the quarter remained around 45 per cent of the pre-Covid levels.

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

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

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

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

UAE scraps Israel boycott to foster ties

MAHER CHMAYTELLI DUBAI, AUG. 30

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

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

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

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

Cheaper diamonds fire life into gem trading

THOMAS BIESHEUVEL AUG. 30

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

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

information is private.

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

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

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



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

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

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

Yet US sales, which account for almost half of all diamond demand, remain under pres-

sure as the pandemic keeps shops closed, millions are unemployed and the country posted its biggest quarterly economic contraction since the Great Depression.

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

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

"In August the rough diamond market showed clear signs of revival after being frozen for

several months," he said. It's not yet at pre-pandemic levels though, as "external factors, including international travel restrictions, continue to weigh on negatively on the market," he said.

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

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

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



## SHORT TAKES

## Messi skips Covid testing with Barca

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

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

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

Messi announced his decision to leave on Tuesday by sending the club a burofax, a certified document similar to a telegram. — AP

## Bucks advance in NBA playoffs

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

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

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

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

## Djokovic seals 35th Masters title

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

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

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

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

"Going on an unbeaten run so far this year obviously brings even more confidence each match." — AP

## NOVAK, SERENA CHASE HISTORY IN US OPEN

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

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

Defending champion Rafael Nadal and women's number one Ashleigh Barty are among high-profile absentees at the US National Tennis Center, which just months ago was transformed into an emergency coronavirus field hospital. — AFP

## Live on TV

## TENNIS

## US Open

First round matches from 8.30 pm on Star Sports Select 1, HD

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## India, Russia share gold medal

C. SANTHOSH KUMAR  
CHENNAI, AUG. 30

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

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

Chess.com, the online partners of the event.

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

## FIRST GOLD FOR INDIA

It was India's second medal at the Olympiad after their historic bronze at the 2014 edition in Norway. The online edition adopted a unique format with countries fielding mixed teams — men, women and juniors — after the scheduled 44th Olympiad had to be cancelled in Moscow. Indian team comprised Vidit Gujrathi (captain), Viswanathan Anand, P. Harikrishna, Koneru Humpy, Dronavalli Harika, R. Vaishali, Bhakti Kulkarni, Nihal



Sarin, P. Raghavendra R. Aravindh Chithambaram, R. Vaishali, Bhakti Kulkarni, Divya Deshmukh and Vantika Agrawal.

## VISHY ENDS OLYMPIAD DROUGHT

For India's chess king Anand, it was his first taste of Olympiad success. He made his Olympiad debut as a teenager in 1984, but a

match and played out a draw against Ian Nepomniachtchi.

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

## 'NEW START' FOR INDIAN CHESS

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

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

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

## Kohli &amp; Co. sweat it out RCB captain says he was scared to hit nets

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

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

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

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

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

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

RCB arrived in Dubai last week ahead of the 13th IPL which is scheduled to begin on September 19 in the UAE. The team hit the nets on Saturday after successfully ending their quarantine period.

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

"The spinners looked pretty good for day one, they pitched the ball in consistent areas for long enough," said Kohli.

— PTI



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

## Did Raina leave CSK camp in UAE after rift?

C. SANTHOSH KUMAR  
CHENNAI, AUG. 30

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

Apparently, the hotel room he was allotted was "inadequate" for him and Raina wanted a suite similar to the one Dhoni had been provided with.

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

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

N. Srinivasan, the man behind Super Kings, said on Sunday that cricketers, sometimes, "act like prima donnas".

".....like the temperamental actors of the olden days. Chennai Super Kings have always been like a family and all

seniors players have learnt to co-exist," Srinivasan was quoted as saying.

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

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

## MORGAN, MALAN SCRIPT ENGLAND VICTORY IN T20

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

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

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

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

## COMMUNITY | SHIELD



Arsenal's Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang lifts the trophy after winning the English FA Community Shield match between Arsenal and Liverpool at Wembley Stadium in London on Saturday. — AP

## Amazing Auba seals it for Arsenal

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

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

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

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

As if Arteta needed any reminding, it was another sign of the influence wielded by his captain Aubameyang, who is yet to

commit his long-term future to the club as he enters the final year of his contract.

Gabon forward Aubameyang has kept Arsenal waiting nervously during protracted talks and he demurred when asked in a post-match interview if he was ready to sign the club's contract offer. "We are going to see, today we will just take the trophy and that is it," he said.

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

"We are close," Arteta said of the contract. "He was magnificent in the FA Cup final and again today."

"I try to do my job, which is convince him that he is in the right place, that he has the environment here to produce the moments like he's done today and he's done here three weeks ago." — AFP

## HAMILTON WINS, CLOSES IN ON SCHUMI RECORD

## BELGIAN | GP

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

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

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

Max Verstappen came third for Red Bull, seven

seconds further adrift, to claim his sixth podium finish in succession.

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

"It wasn't the easiest of races," said Hamilton. "I had a lock-up, which produced vibrations, at Turn Five and another one at the last corner and it was a bit of a struggle, but nonetheless I think it was ok in the end."

At the British GP, Hamilton had clung on to win after one of his tyres disintegrated. — AFP

## In just 10 days alarm bells started ringing in IPL bubble



Hemant Kenkre  
Silly Point

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

bubble; very different from what the three witches had chanted in the Bard's play.

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

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

With members testing positive, whatever plans that team CSK may have had of stepping out of their forced confines will need to be reviewed, effectively throwing a spanner in their works. Coming out after a five month hiatus

and being thrown, once again, in severe lock down situation with zero human contact is going to be a big test for the players who are raring to step out on the grassy field.

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

With quarantine rules being different in the three

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

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

Apart from monitoring the movements of players and support staff, team managements are tasked with the all important

effort to keep everyone in good spirits and in a positive frame of mind. The IPL is a high powered tournament in which a big role is played by maintaining the mental balance of team members and keep them from succumbing to pressure which can make or break the sides.

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

more) for 80 plus days under harsh guidelines is going to be a thankless and ground breaking effort.

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