





# Surprised Biden picked 'nasty' Harris: Don

Harris, 55, whose mother an Indian, is currently US Senator

**Washington, Aug. 12:** US President Donald Trump said he is surprised that his Democratic Party challenger for the presidential elections Joe Biden has named Indian-origin Senator Kamala Harris as his running mate despite knowing how "nasty" and "disrespectful" she has been towards him.

Biden on Tuesday named Harris as his vice-presidential running mate, making history by selecting the first woman of colour to compete on a major party's presidential ticket.

Harris, 55, whose father is an African from Jamaica and mother an Indian, is currently the US Senator from California.

"We'll see how she works out. She did very, very poorly in the primaries as you know. She was expected to do well. She ended up at right around two per cent," Trump said.

"She had a lot of things happening and so I was a little surprised that he (Biden) picked her. I've been watching her for a long time, and I was a little surprised," Trump said, offering his first reaction to Biden's pick of Harris.

Harris had launched her presidential campaign in January 2019. Her campaign could not take off and by the end of the year, she withdrew from the race.

Harris is the first person of colour to be selected as a vice presidential candidate and also only the fourth woman and first-ever African American and Indian American to be running for the second highest political position in the country.

Responding to questions, Trump told reporters that Harris has been nasty to Biden.

As far as Kamala is concerned, she's a big tax raiser. She's a big slasher of funds for our military. And she's got a lot of difficult things that she's going to have to explain. Plus she was very, very nasty — one of the reasons it surprised me — she was probably nastier than even Pocahontas (Senator Elizabeth Warren) to Joe Biden. She was very disrespectful to Joe Biden, Trump said, referring to the Democratic Party debates.

"It's hard to pick somebody that's disrespectful. When she said (those)



In this file photo, Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden (left) and Senator Kamala Harris shake hands after a Democratic presidential primary debate hosted by ABC at Texas Southern University in Houston.



Donald Trump

things during the debates — the Democrat Primary debates — that were horrible about sleepy Joe. I would think that he wouldn't have picked (her)," Trump said. Commenting on Vice President Mike Pence, Trump said he has been fantastic at his work.

"I will take him over Kamala and the horrible way she, again, treated Justice Brett Kavanaugh. That was a horrible event. I thought it was terrible of her. I thought it was terrible for our nation. I thought she was the meanest, the most horrible, most disrespectful of anybody in the US Senate, Trump said. — PTI

## Uncle says nomination by Biden a pleasant surprise

**B. VIJAYALAKSHMI**  
CHENNAI, AUG. 12

Just hours after Kamala Devi Harris scripted history by becoming the first African-American woman, the first Indian-American and the first Asian-American to be appointed as running mate of Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden in the November presidential elections, her uncle G. Balachandran shared his joy with this newspaper.

"Kamala takes care of her mother Shyamala Gopalan who broke new ground way back in 1958," said Balachandran from New Delhi. Though he had expected the nomination, the official announcement by Biden was a "pleasant surprise". "Kamala is quick on her feet, has established herself as a good debater and has a lot of things

HE ALSO recalled his elder sister Shyamala's grit and determination who went to UC Berkeley at a very young age of 19 in 1958. 'She was bold and independent. Managed it all by herself, all alone in the US. She broke new ground,' he adds. He also remembers Shyamala bringing her two daughters from Zambia decades ago.

going forward. We are proud of her," he adds.

Shyamala had brought her daughters to Chennai quite often where her parents settled after Gopalan retired from government service. Kamala, the eldest grandchild, was Gopalan's favourite and both of them used to spend time walking on the beach. When asked about her grandfather's influence on Kamala, Balachandran says, "My

father had retired by then and settled in Chennai. He used to take her to Elliot's beach. She also used to have long chats with him." Probably, he must have kindled Kamala's interest in public service.

He also recalled his elder sister Shyamala's grit and determination who went to UC Berkeley at a very young age of 19 in 1958. "She was bold and independent. Managed it all by herself, all alone in the US. She broke new ground," he adds. He also remembers Shyamala bringing her two daughters to Zambia decades ago where his father was posted then.

He signs off saying, "It is common thinking, not progressive thinking or being liberal, that will take you places. All human beings are equal regardless of their colour, gender, race or nationality."

Obama: Biden 'nailed this decision' in picking Harris

**Washington, Aug. 12:** Former US president Barack Obama has joined top Democrats, including Hillary Clinton, to praise Indian-American Senator Kamala Harris' selection as the party's vice presidential candidate in the November election, saying Joe Biden has "nailed this decision".

Presumptive Democratic party presidential nominee Biden on Tuesday named 55-year-old Harris as his vice presidential running mate, making history by selecting the first black woman to compete on a major party's presidential ticket. Harris, whose father is from Jamaica and mother an Indian, is currently the US Senator from California.

"Choosing a vice president is the first important decision a president makes. When you're in the Oval Office, weighing the toughest issues, and the choice you make will affect the lives and livelihoods of the entire country — you need someone with you who's got the judgment and the character to make the right call," Obama said in a statement.

Obama, who served in the White House with Biden for two terms, said the former vice president "nailed this decision" and by choosing Harris he "underscored his own judgment and character" — attributes that are "requirements of the job" of president. Obama said that he has known Harris for a long time.

"She is more than prepared for the job. She's spent her career defending our Constitution and fighting for folks who need a fair shake," he said. Harris is the first Black woman and the first South Asian woman to be picked as a vice presidential candidate for a major party in the US.

Prior to being a Senator, she served as California's attorney general and was the district attorney in San Francisco. — PTI

## V-P pick under lens for tough-on-crime

**Los Angeles, Aug. 12:** Joe Biden's choice of Kamala Harris as his running mate was hailed on Tuesday as a historic first for women of colour, but some warn her record as a tough prosecutor could dent her appeal with two key constituencies — black voters and liberals.

Harris, the first woman and the first black attorney general in the history of the Golden State, portrayed herself as a progressive reformer during her own presidential bid, but some have cast doubts on that claim. "Time after time, when progressives urged her to embrace criminal justice reforms as a district attorney and then the state's attorney general, Ms Harris opposed them or stayed silent," law professor Lara Bazelon wrote last year in an op-ed for *The New York Times*.

"Harris turned legal technicalities into weapons so she could cement injustices," added Bazelon, a former director of the Loyola Law School Project for the Innocent in Los Angeles.

Before serving as attorney general, the 55-year-old Harris was the district attorney in San Francisco. She was elected to the Senate in 2016.

"Kamala Harris had a

BEFORE SERVING as attorney general, the 55-year-old Harris was the district attorney in San Francisco. She was elected to the Senate in 2016. As concerns police brutality, Ms Harris has also been criticised for failing to intervene in cases involving police violence.

reputation in California as a prosecutor and attorney general who waited rather than led, who moved on controversial issues only once she saw what was politically viable," the daily *Sacramento Bee* wrote in a June editorial.

As concerns police brutality — a subject very much in the news following the death of George Floyd, a black man whose killing at the hands of police in May sparked nationwide protests — Harris has also been criticised for failing to intervene in cases involving police violence.

While serving as attorney general in 2016, for example, she opposed a bill to investigate deadly police shootings following the death of a stabbing suspect — shot 21 times by police — that sparked huge protests.

— AFP

## Women to fight sexism, 'ugly' attacks on Kamala

**Washington, Aug. 12:** In the weeks before Joe Biden named Sen. Kamala Harris his running mate, women's groups were readying a campaign of their own: shutting down sexist coverage and disinformation about a vice-presidential nominee they say is headed for months of false smears and "brutal" attacks from Internet haters.

The groups put the media on notice in recent days that they will call out bias one campaign is dubbed "We Have Her Back" and established a "war room" to refute sexist or false attacks as they happen.

They didn't have to wait long. Within minutes of the presumptive Democratic nominee's announcement on

Tuesday, false information was circulating on social media, claiming that Harris had called Biden a "racist" and that she is not eligible to be President.

They say their efforts are informed by the sexism Hillary Clinton faced from Donald Trump, some of his supporters and the media during the 2016 campaign.

"This time we understand the patterns, and this time we have the organizational infrastructure to push back," said Shaunna Thomas, executive director of the UltraViolet, which released a 32-page guide for media along with a coalition of groups including Color of Change PAC, Planned Parenthood Votes and Women's March. — AP

## THE INSPIRING STORY OF MANY FIRSTS

Indian-origin Senator Kamala Devi Harris scripted history when she became the first Black woman to be appointed as running mate by Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden in the November presidential elections.

The 55-year-old California senator becomes just the third woman to be selected as the vice president on a major party ticket. Then-Alaska Governor Sarah Palin in 2008 and New York Representative Geraldine Ferraro in 1984 were the other two.

Harris is known for many firsts. She has been a county district attorney; the district attorney for San Francisco - the first woman and first African-American and Indian-origin to be elected to the position. She would be several firsts in her role as vice president also: the first woman, the first African-American woman, the first Indian-American and the first Asian-American.

Harris grew up embracing her Indian culture, but living a proudly African American life.



In her nearly two terms in office as attorney general, Harris gained a reputation as one of the rising stars of the Democratic Party. She was elected as California's junior US senator in 2017.

It is believed that Harris' nomination will stop Indian-American voters in key battleground states from shifting away from the opposition Democratic Party in the direction of Trump.

## WHO IS KAMALA HARRIS

Kamala Devi Harris was born on October 10, 1964 in Oakland, California. Her mother Shyamala Gopalan was a Tamil breast cancer scientist who emigrated from India in 1960 to pursue a doctorate in endocrinology at the University of California, Berkeley. Her father Donald Harris was a professor at Stanford University.

She got undergraduate degree at Howard University, where she was a member of the Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority. Harris got law degree from University of California, Hastings College of Law in San Francisco.

Harris married Doug Emhoff in 2014. Emhoff has two children from a previous marriage.

## Contact tracing, enhanced testing to resume After brief dip, Delhi sees increase in Covid-19 cases

**SHASHI BHUSHAN**  
NEW DELHI, AUG. 12

The national capital recorded 1,113 fresh coronavirus cases and 14 deaths in last 24 hours. As the cases started rising once again, the Delhi government has decided to focus on contact tracing, enhancement of testing and creation of micro containment zones to contain the fatality rate.

The total number of cases stands at 1,48,504. As many as 1,33,405 patients have recovered, migrated or been discharged, while the number of active cases stands at 10,946.

Fourteen fresh fatalities were recorded in the last 24 hours taking the death toll to 4,153. The number of containment zones stands at 523.

According to a Delhi government health bulletin, a total of 6,472 RT-PCR tests and 12,422 rapid antigen

DELHI RECORDED 1,113 fresh coronavirus cases taking the caseload to over 1.48 lakh, while the death toll has risen to 4,153

tests were carried out in the last 24 hours.

A senior official said that the administration planned to declare a small or micro containment zone to minimise inconvenience to residents in the neighbourhood where Covid 19 cases were reported. "Depending on population, a cluster of two-three houses may be converted into a containment zone. For instance, in posh south Delhi colony, a single house may be sealed. We also get support from locals as a part of locality is declared as containment zones," he added.

Till Wednesday, there were 523 containment zones in the city. With 126 zones, the southwest district is on the top of the list.

The official hinted with slight modification policy to declare a containment zone, the number of containment areas will increase once again in coming days.

"Till last week, the daily count of positive cases had fallen significantly, new cases were less than the recoveries but the trend is reversed," said a senior official.

The city recorded less than 1,000 fresh cases on Monday. Last time, it happened continuously for three days earlier this month between August 2 and 4. "Instead of random procedure, administration would be returning to systematic testing after contact tracing. The situation is very much in control, now efforts are being made to prevent it from going out of control. We need to maintain the recovery rate of almost 90% at present or further improve it," he said.

## SDMC eases rules for property conversion

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, AUG. 12

The South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) has simplified the process of conversion of leasehold properties to freehold.

According to SDMC standing committee chairman Raj Dutt Gehlot, the new simplified process will be applied on commercial properties in 38 markets under its jurisdiction out of 79 such markets transferred by the Land and Development Office (L&DO) to local bodies.

So far, a person getting a shop allotted was required to get permission from authorities before transferring the ownership right of the leasehold property to another person.

In case of non-compliance, a penalty of ₹3,000 per year was imposed. The civic agency on Tuesday proposed to waive off this condition.

"With the approval, the person won't need to seek permission from the authority concerned before transferring the

leasehold property," said Mr Gehlot.

Also, there is a proposal to change the condition, which requires the person who gets the shop allotted to pay 50% of the unearned increase to the civic agency during transfer of the leasehold property. The unearned income is the difference between the market value of the property at the time of granting of lease and the existing market value. Mr Gehlot said that there are 1,252 shops, which are on leasehold basis, including 392 shops on license fee basis.

According to the new proposal, an owner will be required to pay conversion charges at the time of getting property freehold at the rate 10 per cent of the value of the circle rate of property multiplied by area of the property and 33 per cent of the conversion amount as transfer fees to SDMC.

According to the present conditions, a lessee cannot sell leasehold property without permission of the department.

## SC may resume limited physical court soon

**PARMOD KUMAR**  
NEW DELHI, AUG. 12

Unlocking the physical court hearing, the Supreme Court judges committee on Wednesday has recommended resumption of open court hearing limited to three courts in the next few weeks.

A seven-judge committee headed by Justice N.V. Ramana — the senior most judge of the top court after Chief Justice Sharad A. Bobde — sources said, has recommended that the three courts would be in two corridors of the top court and one on the first

floor. There has been a strong demand from the lawyers and their associations — Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) and Supreme Court Advocate on Record Association (SCAORA) — and the Bar Council of India to resume physical court hearings.

The committee has also recommended that only arguing lawyer of the case would be permitted in the courtrooms when the case is called out.

Based on the measures suggested by medical experts, besides sanitisation, the three courtrooms

would have glass petitioning and exhaust fans for ventilation.

However, it will take about two weeks for the limited physical court hearing to resume and is likely to pave way for the high courts and the subordinate courts to take a leaf from the top court's decision to resume limited physical court hearing.

The 7-judge panel had hinted at the resumption limited physical court hearing during a meeting with the representatives of the SCBA and SCAORA and the Bar Council of India on Tuesday evening.

## Delhi govt to honour Covid warriors on I-Day

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, AUG. 12

A 49-year-old assistant sub-inspector of Delhi police died and a constable was injured when the roof of a building in North Delhi where they went as part of a tenant verification drive collapsed.

The police said ASI Zakir Hussain and constable Depu (42), who are posted in Bara Hindu Rao police

station, had gone to Ram Bagh road in connection with the tenant verification drive ahead of the Independence Day.

According to DCP, North district, Monika Bhardwaj, around 10.20 am on Wednesday, the ASI and constable reached a building and noticed illegal construction being carried out on its third floor.

"When they climbed up to the third floor to ascertain

details and take photographs of illegal construction work, the third floor, which was a terrace and on which they were standing, caved in," said the DCP.

"While the ASI fell on the ground floor, Debu fell on the second floor and sustained minor injuries. With the help of local people, Hussain was shifted to Aruna Asaf Ali hospital where he was declared brought dead," she said.



## SHORT TAKES

Cong spokesman  
Rajiv Tyagi dies

**New Delhi:** Congress leader and spokesperson Rajiv Tyagi passed away on Wednesday after suffering a heart attack, the party said. A young leader, Tyagi suffered an attack soon after a TV debate and fell unconscious at his residence in Vaishali, sources said. He was immediately rushed to the Yashoda Hospital in Ghaziabad, where doctors tried to revive him, but could not, the sources said. "We are deeply saddened by the sudden demise of Shri Rajiv Tyagi. A staunch Congressman & a true patriot. Our thoughts and prayers are with his families & friends in this time of grief," the Congress tweeted. — PTI

5 people killed in  
K'taka bus mishap

**Bengaluru:** At least five people, including three children, were charred to death and many others sustained burns when a Bengaluru bound bus they were travelling in caught fire on a national highway in Chitradurga district on Wednesday morning. "Five people have died after a bus caught fire on NH-4 at about 3.30 am. The bus was on the way from Bijapur to Bengaluru," a police officer said. The deceased have not been identified. He suspected that the vehicle was parked by the road side when it caught fire. — PTI

JD-U leader shot  
dead in Bihar dist

**Madhepura, Bihar:** A 50-year-old JD(U) leader was shot dead in Bihar's Madhepura district, the police said on Wednesday. The incident took place around 8 pm on Tuesday, when Ashok Yadav, JD(U)'s Gamhariya block president, was standing near a shop in his Joghani village, Madhepura sub-divisional police officer (SDPO) Washi Ahmad said. Two persons, who came on a motorcycle, opened fire at him from a close range and fled from the spot, he said. Yadav was rushed to the Supaul Sadar Hospital where doctors declared him brought dead. — PTI

Cong shows Nath  
as 'Arjun' ahead  
of MP byelections

**RABINDRA NATH  
CHOUDHURY**  
BHOVAL, AUG. 12

The Congress on Wednesday portrayed former chief minister Kamal Nath as Arjun of epic Mahabharat ahead of the upcoming Assembly byelections in Madhya Pradesh, inviting ridicule from ruling BJP.

Life-size posters featuring Mr Nath in attire of the particular character of Mahabharat alongside Lord Krishna dotted main thoroughfares of Indore city.

Mr Nath has been hailed as "Arjun of development" in the poster.

The poster campaign was launched by Madhya Pradesh Congress Committee secretary Rakesh Singh Yadav ahead of upcoming byelections in 27 assembly constituencies in Madhya Pradesh, scheduled to be held by end of September this year.

The posters have gone viral in social media, triggering a political row here. BJP national general secretary in-charge of West Bengal affairs of the party Kailash Vijayvargiya described the campaign by Congress projecting Mr Nath as Arjun as "height of sycophancy".



► **FORMER MP** CM Kamal Nath has been hailed as 'Arjun of development' in posters put up by Cong.

► **VETERAN BJP** leader & state minister Narottam Mishra took a jibe at Mr Nath for turning devotee of different gods at different points of time.

"Congress promotes a culture of sycophancy. It is good to see that Mr Nath has turned 'unusually' religious at the fag-end of his illustrious political career during which he served as minister at the Centre several times", Mr Vijayvargiya remarked sarcastically. Veteran BJP leader and state home minister Narottam Mishra took a jibe at Mr Nath for turning devotee of different gods at different points of time, saying that "he (Mr Nath) behaved like a chameleon".

"Sometimes, Mr Nath claims him as a devotee of Lord Hanuman and recites Sunderkand (in praise of the monkey god). Sometimes, he is seen as a devotee of Lord Krishna. He markets him as the situation demanded", Mr Mishra said.

UP severe hit by flooding, staff  
told to ensure hygiene in camps

**Lucknow, Aug. 12:** With 16 districts of Uttar Pradesh affected by floods, chief minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday directed officials to ensure sanitisation and hygiene in relief camps set up in the deluge-hit areas. The Sharda river in Lakhimpur Kheri's Palliakalan and the Saryu at Barabanki's Elgin Bridge, Ayodhya and Ballia's Turtipar are flowing above the danger mark, state relief commissioner Sanjay Goyal said.

"The chief minister has directed (officials) to ensure sanitisation and hygiene in flood relief camps in 16 districts, where 523 village are affected. Among the affected villages, 275 are marooned," he told reporters.

Mr Goyal said the CM has directed the district magistrates of the affected districts to arrange Covid testing for those in relief camps showing any symptoms and admit them to hospitals if needed. — PTI

4 Maoists  
shot dead  
in Bastar  
encounter

**RABINDRA NATH  
CHOUDHURY**  
BHOVAL, AUG. 12

Four suspected Maoists were on Wednesday gunned down in an encounter with security forces in a jungle in Chhattisgarh's south Bastar district of Sukma.

A joint search party comprising personnel of district reserve group (DRG), CRPF's 223rd battalion and 201st battalion of CoBRA (Commando Battalion for Resolute Action) came under attack by a group of armed Naxals near Pulamphar forest under Jagargunda police station in Sukma district at around 9.30 in the morning, leading to an exchange of fire between them, that lasted nearly one hour.

Bodies of four Maoists were later recovered at the encounter site.

Besides, four weapons, including a .303 rifle and a 12 bore pistol as well as huge quantities of explosives and camp materials, were recovered, a senior police officer posted in Bastar said.

"Acting on a specific intelligence inputs on presence of Maoists in the area, a joint operation was launched by security forces. The joint search party came under attack when they reached near the Naxal camp set up near Pulamphar jungle, leading to the gun battle between them", Bastar range inspector general of police P. Sunderraj told this newspaper.

The Naxal camp was set up by the Maoist cadres belonging to Jagargunda area committee of the outlawed CPI (Maoist), he added.

We will deal with rioters with  
iron hand, says K'taka mantri

BJP leaders accuse Cong of not being 'vocal' against 'minority groups'

**Bengaluru, Aug. 12:** Terming the violence in the city as a "well-planned act", Karnataka revenue minister R. Ashoka on Wednesday said the "traitors", who perpetrated the riots would be dealt with an iron hand and steps would be taken to ensure that such incidents do not recur.

Speaking to reporters after meeting Congress MLA Akhanda Srinivasa Murthy at Vidhana Soudha, Mr Ashoka said, "The manner in which the riots were perpetrated shows that it was a well-planned act and was intended to spread to other parts of the city. These are traitors and we will subdue them."

As many as three people were killed in the police firing and scores other injured, including 50 policemen, in the violence that erupted on Tuesday night at D.J. Halli in Pulakeshinagar locality over an alleged social media post on a "communally sensitive" issue posted by the MLA's relative.

The minister said the legislator's house was completely damaged and belongings, including sarees and jewels, were looted while the rest was set on fire.

"It is clear from the intensity of vandalism that the intention was to attack and finish off Srinivasa Murthy. It has to be investigated whether any anti-social elements from within the state and outside were involved," Mr Ashoka said.

Claiming that the violence was planned to terrorise the people of Bengaluru, Mr Ashoka said government will send across a strong message so that no one would ever dare to take law into their hands again.

He also said he met the



Police personnel stand next to the charred remains of a vehicle vandalised by a mob in Bengaluru on Wednesday.

— PTI

chief minister and apprised him of the ground situation.

The minister added that steps would be taken to rein in anti-social elements as vandalism was carried out in a manner that communities were identified to target them.

Meanwhile, BJP leaders questioned the Congress as to why it hesitated to condemn the riots by "minority groups" on the residence of its own MLA.

The ruling party leaders in Karnataka projected the incident that led to violence in parts of the city as an attack on a Dalit MLA.

"Dead silence by @INCIndia @INC Karnataka even after their Dalit MLA Sri Akhanda Srinivasa Murthy was attacked, house ransacked yesterday in Bengaluru. Total support for RIGHT TO RIOT ...? For them appeasement is the only official party policy," BJP general secretary B.L. Santosh tweeted. — PTI

Riot-hit B'luru areas  
resemble a war zone

**Bengaluru, Aug. 12:** Areas under Pulakeshinagar Assembly constituency here resembled a war zone on Wednesday, hours after an unruly mob went on a rampage torching vehicles, irked over a "communally sensitive" social media post allegedly by put up by a relative of a Congress MLA.

Charred vehicles, shards of glass from broken windows, stones and bricks lie strewn over the deserted roads of the violence-affected localities.

Earlier, three people were killed in police firing and scores of others wounded, including at least 50 policemen in the violence and arson that erupted in the city on Tuesday night and continued till the wee hours of

Wednesday. Property of Congress legislator Akhanda Srinivasa Murthy and his family members were targeted after a 'communally sensitive' social media post uploaded online by one of his relatives enraged a section of people.

"We were not at home when all this happened," Jayanthi, the MLA's sister said weeping inconsolably. "The only solace is that my brother and his family are safe," she said.

The violent crowd set on fire police vehicles and barged into DJ Halli police station on the intervening night of Tuesday and Wednesday and damaged the property.

The police has arrested about 110 people on charges of rioting. — PTI

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Development works  
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• Ballabhgarh (BVH)	26	• Jakhal (JHL)	12
• Palwal (PWL)	18	• Mansa (MSZ)	12
• Faridabad (FDB)	17	• Kaithal (KLE)	15
• Partapur (PRTP)	20	• Jind City (JCY)	12
• Ghaziabad (GZB)	122	• Farukhanagar (FN)	39
• Muzaffarnagar (MOZ)	10		

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## SHORT TAKES

## Bengal Covid patient dies in ambulance

**Kolkata:** A 60-year-old woman suffering from Covid-19 died in an ambulance outside a city private hospital as she was allegedly made to wait by its authorities, who reportedly demanded that ₹3 lakh be first paid for admission, her family members said on Wednesday. The hospital authorities have refuted the charge and said that the woman's family was given an estimate for treatment but not pressurised for making payments. The woman hails from Tamluk in East Midnapore district and the alleged incident took place on Monday night after she was brought to the hospital from a nursing home in the city after she tested positive and reported severe health problems, a Kolkata Police official said. Her son Nazeem Khan has lodged a police complaint against the hospital. — PTI

## Fire breaks out at Guj Covid hospital

**Bodelli:** A fire broke out in the Covid-19 ward of a two-storey hospital in Bodelli town of Gujarat's Chhotaudepur district on Wednesday morning, an official said. There was no casualty in the blaze that erupted on the second floor of Bodelli Dhokalia Public Hospital, the official said, adding that 10 Covid-19 patients undergoing treatment at the facility were shifted to its lower floor and some of them were later admitted to other hospitals. "A minor fire occurred in the switch board of COVID-19 ward following short-circuit in the morning. The blaze was controlled immediately by the staff with the help of fire extinguisher," Chief District Health Officer Dr Mahesh Chaudhary said. "As a precaution, the staff also shifted all the 10 patients to lower floor," he said. — PTI

## 59 inmates +ve in Kerala prison

**Thiruvananthapuram:** Kerala on Wednesday recorded 1212 cases of Covid 19 even as 59 inmates of Poojapura central jail here tested positive for the virus. Of the new cases, 1068 contracted the Infection through contact, 51 came from abroad, 64 from other states, source of infection among 45 not known and do 28 health workers also got infected. The 59 prisoners who tested positive had shared a prison block with a 71 year old inmate who contracted the Infection earlier. Thiruvananthapuram district recorded highest cases at 266 followed by Malappuram 261, Ernakulam 121, Alappuzha 118. As many as 880 people recovered from infection on Wednesday.

## 'Non-Covid patients being neglected'

**Bhubaneswar:** The Congress on Wednesday alleged utter neglect of non-Covid patients by the state government and said that a good number of people suffering from diseases other than the Coronavirus were dying due to inaction by the health officials. The party also sought a white-paper from the state government on the money spent towards treatment of Covid-19 patients. "Non-Covid patients, both those who are suffering from chronic health problems and common diseases like cold and fever, are not being given admission in hospitals. They are being made to wait for two-three days for their Covid negative certificates. As a result, a good number of patients are dying while others are battling for life," said Dr Biswaranjan Mohanty, Congress national secretary.

## Three cops die of Covid-19 in Maha

**Mumbai:** At least three Maharashtra police personnel died of COVID-19 and 294 tested positive for the deadly infection in the last 24 hours, an official said on Wednesday. A total of 121 police personnel, including 11 officers, have succumbed to coronavirus infection in the state so far, the official said. With the addition of 294 fresh COVID-19 cases, the tally of infections in the police force has reached 11,392, of which 9,187 personnel have recovered and 2,084 are undergoing treatment, he said.

■ We don't give any importance to what Parth says: Pawar  
Pawar snubs Ajit Pawar's sonAGE CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI, AUG. 12

Calling Ajit Pawar's son Parth "immature", NCP president Sharad Pawar on Wednesday said he gives "absolutely no importance to his grand-nephew's recent demand for a CBI probe into the case of actor Sushant Singh Rajput's death. The NCP chief also said that he has full faith in Maharashtra and Mumbai police. However, he would not oppose if someone still wants the central agencies to probe the case. Parth Pawar, who lost last year's Lok Sabha election from Maval seat in Maharashtra, in the case of Rajput's death. On July 27, Parth met state home minister Anil Deshmukh demanding that the case of Rajput's death be handed over to the CBI or a Special Investigation

## Sushant case: CBI set to question actor's flatmate Siddharth Patani

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, AUG. 12

The CBI, probing the Shushant Singh Rajput death case, will soon issue summons to Siddharth Patani, flatmate of the late actor, for questioning. Sources said, "Siddharth Patani and Sushant lived together in the flat and was among his good friends. Patani's questioning is crucial and he may be confronted with other people during question-



ing". Besides, the CBI is preparing to examine Samuel Miranda, house manager of Sushant Singh, in a day or two, they added. "It is also believed that Patani and Samuel Miranda were present at the incident site. Both have already been examined by Mumbai Police, which is also investigating the case," sources said.

Team (SIT) be formed with forensic experts to probe the case. The 34-year-old actor was found hanging at his Bandra residence on June 14. "We attach absolutely no

importance to what my grand-nephew says. He is immature. I have clearly said that I have 100 per cent trust in the Maharashtra police," the NCP chief said.

## Sushant more famous after death: NCP neta

BHAGWAN PARAB  
MUMBAI, AUG. 12

Senior Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader Majeed Memon triggered a row with his remark on Sushant Singh Rajput saying that the late actor has become more famous after his death. However, the NCP quickly disassociated itself from his comments and said it was his personal opinion. "Sushant was not as famous during his lifetime as he is after his death. The space in the media he is occupying nowadays is perhaps more than our PM or President of the United States!" the NCP leader tweeted.



Children dressed as Lord Krishna at Durgiana Temple on the occasion of Krishna Janmashtami festival in Amritsar on Wednesday. — PTI

## May God do whatever is best: Pranab's daughter

72-hr-yagna at Mukherjee's hometown in Bengal

**New Delhi, Aug. 12:** The daughter of former President Pranab Mukherjee, who is in a critical condition after undergoing brain surgery, prayed for her father saying May God do whatever is best for him. Sharmistha Mukherjee, who is a Congress leader, said her father has fallen critically ill just a year after he received the 'Bharat Ratna' — the country's highest civilian award.

"Last year August 8 was one of the happiest day for me as my dad received Bharat Ratna. Exactly a year later on August 10 he fell critically ill. May God do whatever is best for him and give me strength to accept both joys and sorrows of life with equanimity."

The condition of former President Pranab Mukherjee worsened on Tuesday, doctors attending on him said.

The Army's Research and Referral (R&R) Hospital said he remains



Last year August 8 was one of the happiest day for me as my dad received Bharat Ratna. Exactly a year later he fell critically ill. May God do whatever is best for him and give me strength to accept both joys and sorrows of life with equanimity.

— Sharmistha Mukherjee

on ventilator support and he has not shown signs of improvement, after he underwent a brain surgery on Monday.

The 84-year-old former President was admitted to the military hospital around noon on Monday, and had also tested positive for COVID-19 prior to the surgery.

"Shri Pranab Mukherjee's health condition continues to remain critical at Army Hospital (R&R) Delhi Cantonment. The former President, who underwent lifesaving emergency surgery for brain clot on 10 August 2020, has not shown any improvement and his health status has worsened. He remains on ventilatory support," the hos-

pital said in its bulletin on Tuesday.

Mr Mukherjee was President of India between 2012 and 2017.

Meanwhile, prayers for the speedy recovery of former President Pranab Mukherjee continued on Wednesday in his hometown Kirnahan in West Bengal's Birbhum district.

Residents of Mukherjee's hometown have started a 72-hour "yagna" since Janmashtami on Tuesday for his recovery.

The former President's family members also offered prayers in his ancestral village Miriti, a few kilometres from Kirnahan.

— PTI

## Political slugfest as road to new bridge collapses

NAYEAR AZAD  
PATNA, AUG. 12

RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav on Wednesday lashed out at the Nitish Kumar-led NDA government after an approach road leading to a newly constructed Bangra Ghat bridge in Gopalganj collapsed hours before it was inaugurated by the chief minister.

Sharing the video of the damaged approach road, Leader of the Opposition Tejashwi Yadav raised serious question on Nitish Kumar government's "zero corruption policy".

According to Tejashwi, "the incident has exposed the corruption in the state government. The approach path leading the bridge collapsed the same day it was inaugurated by our CM. I have a video to prove that the incident has occurred."

The bridge, constructed at a cost of ₹509 crore, was inaugurated by Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar on Wednesday through a video conference. Tejashwi Yadav and other Opposition leaders said that before the inau-

BIHAR

guration, officials were asked to repair the damaged road.

"What would have happened if people lost their lives due to the incident"? Tejashwi Yadav said while talking to reporters.

According to reports, the incident occurred due to the heavy flow of water following serious damage to Saran Dam.

This is not the first incident, Nitish Kumar led government had come under sharp criticism last month after approach road leading to the newly inaugurated bridge, constructed at the cost of ₹263.47 crore, collapsed within a month of its opening.

A portion of the path leading to the newly constructed Sattarghat Bridge over Gandak River had collapsed in July, a month after chief minister Nitish Kumar inaugurated it. The incident had occurred after water flow increased due to heavy rainfall. The incident had snowballed into a major political controversy.

## Naga groups for early and peaceful solution of issues

MANOJ ANAND  
GUWAHATI, AUG. 12

Anger is prevailing at the grassroots in Nagaland against some of the frontal organizations like Naga Hoho, Naga Mothers Association and Naga Students Federation for their alleged attempt to delay the Naga peace-process at the behest of section of vested interest circle including the leaders of ruling party.

Indicating that signing of the peace accord may lead to change of guard or mid-term polls to facilitate the rebel groups to contest the elections and take over the power in the state, security sources told this newspaper that the statement of the 14 Apex Naga Tribal Hoho, which commands the supreme authority on Naga people, has come as major setback for vested interest circle trying to delay peace-talks. "The political negotiations have progressed to the final leg where inclusive

DEMAND FOR replacing interlocutor R.N. Ravi by a section of organisation is an attempt to derail the negotiation that is near solution: Lotha Hoho

agreement could be reached anytime, if negotiating parties stood committed to the October 31, 2019 understanding," said the Apex Naga Tribal Hoho while warning, "This is not the time for negative campaign as it could only delay the process and lead to another endless negotiations while remaining in one's comfort zone at the cost of peace and tranquillity. It was pertinent to avoid the double standard role of negotiation, without any commitment for solution." Outright rejecting the demand of Naga Hoho, Naga Mothers Association and Naga Students Federation for changing the interlocutor, the 14 Apex Naga Tribal Hoho said, "The voice and aspirations of the Nagas have grown louder each

day for a peaceful solution to the protracted Naga political issue."

The supreme tribal body while expressing their anguish also made an appeal to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to demonstrate his magnanimity and generously address one of the oldest political conflicts, with resounding effects in the political history of magnificent India, with no intention of change of the Interlocutor. Meanwhile another powerful tribal group — Lotha Hoho, said that demand for replacing the interlocutor R.N. Ravi by a section of organisation is an attempt to derail the negotiation that is near solution. Expressing deep anguish, chairman Er. Mhondamo Ovung and general secretary S. Aben Ngulie of the Lotha Hoho said, "After 23 years of negotiations, most of the stakeholders are in the podium and that all negotiations have formally concluded on October 31, 2019."



Students Federation of India (SFI) members during a protest rally against the National Education Policy-2020 in Kolkata on Wednesday. — PTI

## Odisha: Film on mask wins award

AKSHAYA KUMAR  
SAHOO  
BHUBANESWAR, AUG. 12

A realistic short film based on the current Covid-19 situation has brought pride and applause for Odisha from all around the world. The short film *Mask* directed by Sweta Kumar Dash, a senior officer of the Odisha Administrative Service (OAS), has won the prestigious International People's Choice Award at the Quarantine Image Film Festival-2020 in Argentina.

Masks during the time of Coronavirus play a significant role to save lives. Sensing the need for masks during these testing times, Sweta Kumar wrote the story and created the short film.

The bureaucrat who is now on a four-month deputation to Ganjam district for Covid duty has managed to find time during leisure to prepare the script and direct the



movie. The 7-minute-18-second film depicts the struggle of a poor minor boy to sustain a livelihood for his family amid Covid-19 pandemic. The boy moved around the hustle-bustle of the city to sell masks in the day that were hand-stitched by his mother during night.

The film also showed some shades of grey reality which includes the reluctance of people to purchase the masks because of its low price.

Wonderful acting by Ajay Choudhury, a minor boy hailing from a poor family in Berhampur in Ganjam district, has received appreciation from all around the world.



Narendra Modi

## PM to unveil next phase of direct tax reforms

**New Delhi, Aug. 12:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday will unveil the next phase of direct tax reforms aimed at easing compliance and reward honest taxpayers, as the government looks to rebuild the pandemic-hit economy.

"The Prime Minister will launch the platform for 'Transparent Taxation Honoring the Honest' via video conference on August 13, 2020," an official statement said on Wednesday.

While the statement did not give details of the reforms to be unveiled, the launch of the platform is expected to further carry forward the journey of direct tax reforms undertaken during last six years.

The reforms include reduction in corporate tax last year to 22 per cent from 30 per cent for existing companies and 15 per cent for new manufacturing units, scrapping of dividend distribution tax and faceless assessment. "The focus of the tax reforms has been on reduction in tax rates and on simplification of direct tax laws. Several initiatives have been taken by the CBDT for bringing in efficiency and transparency in the functioning of the I-T Department," it said.

The Budget for 2020-21 fiscal unveiled on February 1, had announced a 'taxpayer charter', which is expected to have statutory status and will empower citizens by ensuring time-bound services by the Income Tax department.

The charter will ensure trust between a taxpayer and the administration and reduce harassment, as well as increase efficiency of the department, finance minister Nirmala Sitharman had said.

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) is the apex decision making body in direct tax matters. — PTI

## IAF protests against Gunjan Saxena

PAWAN BALI  
NEW DELHI, AUG. 12

The Indian Air Force (IAF) has protested that the movie, *Gunjan Saxena: The Kargil Girl*, starring Janhvi Kapoor portrays the work culture in the Air Force in a "negative light" and being discriminatory towards women officers.

The movie is inspired by Flight lieutenant Gunjan Saxena, India's first female Air Force officer to fly in a combat zone during the Kargil war. The



movie is right now being streamed on Netflix.

IAF has written to Dharma Production, Netflix and the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC).

"IAF as a service has always ensured that the organisation is gender

neutral and has always provided an equal opportunity to both male and women personnel," said IAF in a letter to CBFC. Sources said that the letter mentions that as per initial understanding, Dharma Productions had agreed to represent air force with authenticity and make all efforts to ensure that the film helps to inspire the next generation of IAF Officers, said sources. It said that certain scenes and dialogues in the movie and its trailer, which were forwarded

to IAF for viewing, have been found to portray the IAF in an undue negative light. "In the aim to glorify the screen character of 'Ex-Fit Lt Gunjan Saxena', Dharma Productions presented some situations that are misleading and portray an inappropriate work culture especially against women in the IAF," said the letter.

It said that the Production House was informed about the objectionable portion of the movie and was advised to delete or modify them.



## THE ASIAN AGE

13 AUGUST 2020

### PM ‘mantra’ old hat, should fund state fights

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given the nation what he called a new mantra to defeat the coronavirus: testing, tracing, isolation and treatment. The Prime Minister also said if the 10 states that account for 82 per cent of the number of Covid patients are able to contain it, then India will win the war against the pandemic. He has asked the chief ministers of West Bengal, Gujarat, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Punjab to step up testing.

It is welcome that the Prime Minister is seen to be taking an active interest in the war against the virus but the mantra he has given is by no means new. This formula — to test all the people who could have been in contact with infected people, trace all their contacts and isolate or quarantine them, and treat all those who have been infected — has long been employed successfully across the world. Several Indian states have aggressively pursued this path and have been able to contain the virus. Even Delhi, once considered the corona capital, and Dharavi, the slum in Mumbai, have employed this mantra successfully. The World Health Organisation has been talking of increased number of tests from the very start of the campaign against the virus.

**The suggestion of Tamil Nadu chief minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami that the PM-Cares fund meet at least half of the testing cost merits the Centre’s serious consideration**

The Prime Minister’s advice comes at a time when India’s daily caseload has crossed 60,000; of late, we are ahead of even the United States and Brazil on this count. At present, India with over 23 lakh infections is at the third position in the list of the worst affected nations. With a doubling rate of 22.7 days, India is projected to overtake Brazil in a couple of weeks. The only silver lining is case fatality rate of 2.1 per cent, which is lower than the global average of 3.75 per cent. However, the number of deaths has shown an alarming trend with the figure touching 1000 on some days. India’s number of tests per million of population is low compared with other severely affected nations: 18,300 per million against 1,99,803 of the US and 62,200 of Brazil. India’s test positivity rate is higher than these two countries, too. An early rollout of the mantra across the country when it was under lockdown would have stopped India from coming to such a pass. However, it is always better late than never.

Apart from the new mantra, what the states who are in the frontline of the “war” want is money. Most states are now exhausted in terms of their financial and human resources. The increasing cost of the corona fight and the decreasing economic activity stare them in their faces. The suggestion of Tamil Nadu chief minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami that the PM-Cares fund meet at least half of the testing cost merits the Centre’s serious consideration. The government must also drop its reported move to renege on its statutory obligation to offset the shortfall in GST collection. It must open its coffers and help the states instead so that India emerges a winner as Mr Modi suggested.

### Educating courts, citizens

All fair-minded Indian citizens have occasion to be grateful to the judiciary today — it has done its job well of reading the law right and settling all ambiguities — whether intentional or wishful — concerning the landmark 2005 amendment to the 1956 Hindu Succession Act. Clearcut in nature, the amendment had nevertheless seen several challenges involving its interpretation — especially with respect to whether the karta or head of the family was alive on the date it had been passed — in the present case, the Court settled seven special leave petitions alongside the main matter involving siblings Vineeta and Rakesh Sharma’s share of family property.

The Hindu Succession Act lays down a uniform system of inheritance that applies to persons governed by Hinduism’s Mitakshara (northern India) Dayabhaga (West Bengal, Assam), Murumakkattayam, Aliyasantana and Nambudri (southern India) laws. The amendment expands women’s rights within this law. According to its Section 6, which, the Court pointed out, applies retroactively, rather than retrospectively, daughters are equal coparceners in a Hindu undivided family property irrespective of their date of birth or, alternatively, the date of death of the father, provided there has been no partition or devolution of the property in question before December 20, 2004. This judgment thus ensures that a woman can no longer be denied her share on the ground that she is born prior to the enactment of the law on September 9, 2005, or that her father was not alive on that date.

The judgment is a reminder of another progressive judgment in the same context — on December 22, 2015, the Delhi high court ruled that the eldest female member of a Hindu undivided family can be its karta. However, another critical issue still lies open regarding this very law. It is to do with the daughter’s progeny and lineal descendants. Do they have the same rights as the son’s descendants? Section 15 of the law pertains to the circumstances of a woman dying intestate. It does not give her parental and marital heirs equal rights of inheritance to her property, scrutinising it and returning it to its originator and *his* heirs, as if she has added no value to it on her part. A reform, thereby, is the need of the hour.

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Subhani



## Make India stronger in order to take on China



Sunanda K. Datta-Ray  
Reflections

As Australia draws closer to the US in the name of national security and pursues trade diversification, it risks alienating China, its largest trading partner by far with a crucial role in its economic recovery.” Australia could be replaced by India in that sentence from a recent article in Hong Kong’s *South China Morning Post* newspaper by Yuan Jiang, a Chinese Ph.D. student at Australia’s Queensland University of Technology. In neither case is there a lucid articulation of why precisely China is feared.

Some of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s recent actions might suggest he would like to ban all business with China but lacks the confidence to do so. Restrictions on investment from neighbouring countries — as if Pakistan would put money into India or Nepal has any to do so — are too thinly veiled to fool anyone. Exhorting Indian businessmen to take advantage of the Covid-19 pandemic to lure foreign investors away from China annoys Beijing while ignoring the reasons (weak infrastructure, poor work ethic, bureaucratic stranglehold and all-pervasive corruption) why investors shunned India in the first place.

At the same time, Mr Modi glosses over China’s territorial incursions in Ladakh for reasons that may not be very creditable. Some of his critics suggest that China alone welcomed him when Britain and the United States refused him visas because they disapproved of his attitude to Muslims as the chief minister of Gujarat. As the Congress’ Ahmed Patel remarked,

Mr Modi has paid nine official visits to China whereas no other Indian Prime Minister has gone there more than twice.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi was even more cutting, and pointing to Mr Modi’s obsession with the gigantic statue of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, he added: “It will be the world’s tallest statue but it will be ‘Made in China’, like our shoes and shirts.” It was an unkind cut for two reasons. First, like Shelley’s *Ozymandias*, Mr Modi hankers to impress future generations with massive creations. Second, much to the embarrassment of all thinking Indians, the fetish has led him straight into China’s embrace. Only China’s Jiangxi Toqine Metal Crafts Corporation, allegedly the world’s largest foundry, could produce the 7,000 or so bronze plates and panels that the \$430-million, 600-ft figure needed.

The dependence is evident in other more vital spheres. As China’s *Global Times*, a daily tabloid published under the Chinese Communist Party’s auspices, noted smugly: “India’s rapid progress in catching up with China when it comes to attracting foreign investment shows its potential to become a global economic powerhouse, but whether India will be the next China in terms of economic growth depends on many factors, and how much help and investment it gets from China may be one of the first and foremost.”

The patronising tone is easily explained: leaving aside the 1962 border war, although both countries have roughly the same population, India’s GDP is only \$2.5 trillion, compared with China’s \$12.2

**Although both countries have roughly the same population, India’s GDP is only \$2.5 trillion, compared with China’s \$12.2 trillion**

trillion. High mobile penetration among 1.3 billion Indians owes much to Chinese Internet platforms, which know from their domestic experience how to translate demographic dividends into consumption power to attract more foreign investment. Among Chinese Internet companies active in India, Alibaba recently invested \$45 million in India’s e-commerce platform Paytm.

As the former Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh, has always reiterated, the Asian ecosystem has ample space for India and China both to grow together. There are enough consumers and sources of raw material and investment capital for two burgeoning economies. There are also signs that the Indian tortoise may not be crawling too far behind the Chinese hare.

While foreign corporate launches mergers and acquisitions in China amounted to nearly \$41.6 billion last year, India did not do too badly, with \$40.6 billion in foreign direct investment. Walmart’s \$16 billion stake in Flipkart meant a 64 per cent year-on-year jump. Moreover, India’s \$79 billion remittances from abroad exceeded the \$67 billion that the overseas Chinese sent back. As a result, while India’s GDP grew 8.2 per cent in the second quarter, China’s economy grew 6.7 per cent.

However, one of the most important of the several factors that stand in the way of India’s robust growth is the obsession with spectacle instead of development. Mr Modi

squanders money on architectural extravaganzas like the Ayodhya temple to Ram that is now being built, reinventing Delhi and gigantic statuary instead of investing in liveable housing, potable water and a creaky healthcare system that is incapable of coping with Covid-19. China, meanwhile, never ceases to advertise itself as the only one among the world’s top five healthcare markets with double digit growth. Another yardstick is that while India is inordinately proud of its nine Nobel laureates, their success is really happenstance. China’s eight prize-winners are the products of the solid primary and secondary school system that has been built up throughout the country.

Standing up to China sounds undeniably patriotic. But we must know the threat in order to repulse it. If the goal had been conquest, China would not have walked away after Bomdila in 1962. If it was economic domination, the Chinese would not have wanted to invest in infrastructure (highways, railways, ports and airports) as well as manufacturing to reduce India’s trade deficit and realise Mr Modi’s “Make in India” dream.

Of course, the Chinese have a strategy and the purpose is to help China, not India. But the way to counter that is not empty bombast and blowing hot and cold, but to build up India’s own economic strength, bargain hard over trade terms to increase India’s exports, and to cooperate in economic and development projects that help both countries.

Like Australia, India too cannot contain China in the South China Sea. It would only diminish itself by becoming another Tibet, Xinjiang or now Hong Kong in America’s anti-China armoury.

*The writer is a senior journalist, columnist and author*

#### LETTERS

#### POWER OF RAJE

In the Sachin Pilot-Congress truce after a month-long crisis, a key role was played by the quiet power of former Rajasthan chief minister Vasundhara Raje. The BJP officially maintained it had nothing to do with the Congress crisis. But sources say the party had no choice, given the loud silence of its Rajasthan powerhouse. Without the former CM’s cooperation, the BJP could do little. Rajasthan is the rare state where regional leaders enjoy more influence over MLAs than the central leadership does.

**Bhagwan Thadani**  
Mumbai

#### MAKE PILOT CM

**THIS REFERS TO** “Truce in Raj Cong” (Aug. 12). The Congress needs a fresh head at the top as it isn’t able to instill any fresh ideas. The same old guard occupying top spots at the state level isn’t helping the party though it is able to run the government. What is needed are revolutionary steps, the first being giving young Turks their due. It is they who do much of the running around during campaigns. Thus in Rajasthan it is Sachin Pilot who should be made CM. Mr Gehlot can be his deputy and/or the party president.

**Syed Abdul Monim**  
Navi Mumbai

#### HOPE AT HAND?

**RUSSIA STOLE** a march over other countries by becoming the first nation to grant regulatory approval to a Covid-19 vaccine after less than two months of human testing, a move that drew similarity to Moscow’s success in the Cold War-era space race. The vaccine administered on one of President Vladimir Putin’s daughters, who ventured to volunteer, will be christened ‘Sputnik V’ in homage to the world’s first satellite launched by the erstwhile Soviet Union. But with the vaccine yet to complete its eventual trials and its veracity questioned by experts, one believes that Russia might have jumped the gun.

**N.J. Ravi Chandrer**  
Bengaluru

Every Monday the best letter of the week wins ₹500. Email: [asianage.letters@gmail.com](mailto:asianage.letters@gmail.com).

Saeed Naqvi  
Wide Angle



“Mut ranja kar kisi ko, ke apne to aetqaad, Jee dhaaye ke jo kaaba banaya to kya kiya?”

— Mir Taqi Mir  
We will lose Turkey, if Istanbul is lost.” This statement by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan returned to plague him when his Justice and Development Party lost Ankara, Istanbul and five major cities in 2019’s local elections. This may be one reason why he swiftly transformed the Hagia Sophia museum into a mosque on July 24.

From the Bosphorus, the Istanbul skyline is exactly like picture postcards, a skillful contrast of domes and minarets, slim as thermometers. The brooding Ayasofya Museum stands apart. The greatest Byzantine cathedral, built at the edge of Europe in 537, was designed to dominate the panorama of the Marmara Sea and the Asian mainland beyond.

The first Arab probe of Sindh by Mohammad bin Qasim was in 711 AD, exactly the date when Tariq Ibne Ziad crossed over from Morocco to set up station at what he called Jabal al Tariq, or the Rock of Tariq, which the British renamed Gibraltar in 1704 after the famous Spanish-British naval engagements, including the “Spanish Armada”.

Before the Iberian Peninsula turned into a cauldron of intra-European conflict, 800 years of Muslim rule was somewhat unevenly spread across Spain. To flavour this phase of history, one has to read Maria Rosa Menocal’s masterly *Ornament of the World: How Muslims, Jews and Christians created a Culture of Tolerance in Medieval Spain*. The title itself tells the story. It is astonishing that in the past three decades of gruelling Islamophobia, not one of our liberals has referred to phases in history when robust multiculturalism thrived under Muslim rule. After Reconquista in 1492 by Christians, the Inquisition was much harsher on the Jews who found refuge in Morocco and later in the Ottoman Empire.

The glory of the greatest Eastern Orthodox Cathedral came under partial eclipse when the Roman Catholic Church occupied it for six decades. But it was Sultan Mehmet’s establishment of the Ottoman Empire in 1453 that caused the cathedral to face a predictable total eclipse. It was then transformed into a mosque.

From the debris of the Ottoman Empire after World War I, Mustafa Kemal Pasha “Ataturk” resurrected what is modern Turkey. He was determined to take his country from “backwardness” into “modernism”.

In other words, he turned his back on “Muslim traditionalism” and dreamt of a secular Turkey, custom made for Europe. He replaced the Arabian alphabet with the Roman script in the Turkish language. He banned the “fez” cap, brought the practice of Islam under a department of religious affairs under the Prime Minister, and so on. Little wonder the texture of life in Istanbul and Ankara was more European than Islamic, rather like North Tehran under the Shah of Iran. But what was the ingredient that made Turkey’s secularism comparatively more durable? It was the Turkish Army, which became the guarantor of the republic’s secularism. Ataturk divined, and quite rightly too, that Hagia Sophia mosque would be an eyesore for Europe, in perpetuity. With one executive order in 1934, it was reinvented as a museum of Byzantine history.

It was Western callousness that, in the ultimate analyses, made Turkey’s secular edifice vulnerable. Western, mostly American, and Israeli hostility to Arab socialism (Egypt), Ba’athism (Iraq, Syria) and Libya’s cradle-to-grave welfare system (details of the Afghan tumult are only slightly different) promoted Islamism on an unspeakable scale. The details of Turkey’s upheaval

must be explained. With the breakup of the former Yugoslavia, Serbian and Croatian nationalisms turned upon Bosnian Muslims with vicious brutality. Srebrenica is only one chapter in that shoddy history. Briefings by Gen Sir Michael Rose, the UN military commander, were laden with more gruesome detail by the day, particularly in the four-year siege of Sarajevo. The Balkans, the turf for continuous conflict throughout history between the Ottoman and the Austro-Hungarian Empires, became an open killing field when Belgrade couldn’t hold Yugoslavia together. The helplessness of Bosnian Muslims was unbelievable. Europe’s reason for not intervening rang hollow. Its intervention, it was said, would cause individual countries to take sides in a conflict where World War II adversaries Serbia and Croatia were fighting each other over the Bosnian spoils.

A Europe sucked into the Bosnian war carried the risk of undermining the very purpose for which the EU was forged: to avoid conflict between member states. This was sophistry, said Salman Rushdie. Reverse the religious affiliations of the combatants, and European troops would be in Bosnia within a day.

Mornings, evenings and afternoons, Turks watched the brutalisa-

tion of Bosnia and Sarajevo, both an evocative part of Turkish historical memory. A powerful anti-West Islamist party, Refah, or Welfare, took shape and spread like prairie fire. Necmettin Erbakan, founder of Refah, became Prime Minister. Citing the secular Constitution, the Army swiftly dethroned the “Islamist” Prime Minister.

Erbakan’s protégés Abdullah Gul and Recep Tayyip Erdogan dismantled “Refah” and reappeared in a secular garb as leaders of AK, or Justice and Development Party. As evidence of their secular credentials, they kept alive their EU membership application, despite European callousness. In fact, French President Giscard d’Estaing virtually slapped Turkey across its face, saying: “European civilisation is Christian civilisation.” After his mishandling of Syria, misreading of Europe, the US and Russia, his popularity in serious question, Mr Erdogan has fallen back on the oldest trick in the politician’s book: religious extremism. “Look,” he will address Islamists, “like Mehmet, the conqueror, I have restored for your supplications a great mosque.”

*The writer is a senior journalist and commentator*



## IN BRIEF

## 170 perish in Yemen floods

**Sanaa:** Flash floods triggered by torrential rains have killed at least 172 people across Yemen over the past month, damaging homes and Unesco-listed world heritage sites, officials said. The destruction has dealt a new blow to a country already in the grips of what the United Nations describes as the world's worst humanitarian crisis after years of war between a Saudi-backed government and Iran-allied rebels. In the mainly government-held province of Maarib east of the capital, 19 children were among 30 people killed by the floods, a government official said.

## South Sudan clash: 127 die

**Juba:** Clashes between soldiers and civilians during a disarmament exercise in the South Sudanese town of Tonj left 127 dead, the army spokesman said Wednesday. Major General Lul Ruai Koang said that the fighting erupted on Saturday as security forces carried out an operation to disarm civilians in the area which has seen deadly inter-communal clashes. More than six years after a civil war broke out in the country, and many communities are flush with weapons, which they keep for protection or defence against cattle raids. The violence in Tonj began after armed youths got into a disagreement with soldiers. An initial confrontation was brought under control, but according to Koang the youths mobilised others for an attack on the army position.

## Fight on: HK tycoon to staff

**Hong Kong:** Hong Kong pro-democracy media mogul Jimmy Lai on Wednesday told his reporters to "fight on" after his dramatic arrest, as China widens its crackdown against critics in the semi-autonomous city. The clampdown has gathered pace since Beijing imposed a sweeping security law on the international business hub in June, with opposition politicians disqualified and activists arrested for social media posts. Lai was among 10 people detained under the new law on Monday as around 200 police officers searched the newsroom of his Apple Daily tabloid, which is unapologetically critical of Beijing. The 71-year-old was cheered by staff and handed a bouquet on Wednesday as he returned to the newsroom following a late-night release on bail after 40 hours in custody. "Fight on! Let's fight on," Lai said. "We have the support of the Hong Kong people."

## VIRUS: UK IN RECORD RECESSION

**London, Aug. 12:** The global Coronavirus pandemic pushed Britain into its deepest-ever recession, data showed Wednesday, as New Zealand warned the re-emergence of COVID-19 could delay its upcoming election. The British economy — the world's seventh in size — contracted by an unprecedented 20.4 percent in the period from April to June, far worse than any of its European neighbours and also well below the so-called Group of Seven richest countries in the world.

By comparison, France's economy contracted by 13.9 percent in the second quarter. Canada by 12 percent, Germany 10.1 percent, the United States 9.5 percent and Japan 7.6 percent. The news that the virus has knocked down a fifth of its economy came as Britain continues to grapple with one of the highest death tolls in the world from the pandemic, which some observers blame on the government's early dithering over the imposition of strict confinement measures.

Nevertheless, the subsequent lockdown brought activity shuddering to a halt particularly in the key services, production and construction sectors.

"It is clear that the UK is in the largest recession on record," said the Office for National Statistics, which compiles the data. Even if some experts are still predicting a "V-shaped" rebound, Britain's economic woes could not come at a worse time as it still has to reach a trade deal with the EU following its exit from the 27-country bloc. Experts agree that the absence of any trade deal with the EU would only further exacerbate Britain's problems.

On the other side of the world, New Zealand's Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said the upcoming election in September could be postponed.

## US health chief sceptical of Russia's virus vaccine claim

Important to provide safe, effective vaccine, not a race to be first: Alex Azar

**Taipei, Aug. 12:** Washington's health chief on Wednesday expressed scepticism about Russia's claim of developing the world's first safe Coronavirus vaccine, pointing to the lack of data from its initial trials.

Moscow said Tuesday its vaccine offered "sustainable immunity" against the virus, but Western scientists have previously raised concerns about the development speed of Russian treatments, suggesting researchers were cutting corners. US Health Secretary Alex Azar echoed those concerns Wednesday as he wrapped up a three-day visit to Taiwan.

"It's important that we provide safe, effective vaccines and that the data be transparent... This is not a race to be first," he told reporters during a conference call.

"I should note that two of the six US vaccines that we've invested in entered the phase three clinical trials weeks ago that the Russian vaccine is now only beginning," he added.

"The data from the initial trials in Russia have not been disclosed, it's not transparent." Russian President Vladimir Putin said the vaccine was safe, and that one of his daughters had received a dose.

The vaccine has been named "Sputnik", after the world's first artificial satellite that helped the Soviet Union take the lead in the Cold War space race in 1957.

Governments are under huge pressure to find a vaccine against the coronavirus, which has killed more than 700,000 people worldwide and eviscerated the global economy since it first emerged in central China late last year. The United States is the worst-hit country, with nearly 5.1 million infections and more than 174,000 deaths.

President Donald Trump is facing a tough fight to get re-elected in November, trailing rival Joe Biden in the polls as anger mounts over his administration's response to the pandemic. Azar said he was confident a vaccine would



Policemen talk to residents who were rounded up for violating quarantine protocols in Quezon city, Philippines on Wednesday. The residents were recorded and given lectures on community quarantine protocols before they were released as the capital and outlying provinces undergo another lockdown due to rising Covid-19 cases. — AP

be available for Americans. "We believe that it is highly credible that we will have in the high tens of millions of doses of gold-standard, safe and effective vaccine by the end of this year, and many hundreds of millions of doses as we go into the beginning of next year," he said.

So far, Washington has handed out at least \$9.4 billion to seven vaccine developers and signed manufacturing contracts with five of them to provide 700 million doses.

Azar's Taiwan trip — the highest-level US visit since Washington switched diplomatic recognition to Beijing in 1979 — was billed as an opportunity to learn from the island's success in containing the virus.

Taiwan has reported fewer than 500 infections and just seven Covid-19 deaths.

— AFP

## Don declares 6th vaccine contract

**Washington, Aug. 12:** President Donald Trump on Tuesday announced a \$1.5 billion contract with US biotech company Moderna for 100 million doses of an eventual Coronavirus vaccine, the sixth such deal reached since May.

"I'm pleased to announce that we have reached an agreement with Moderna to manufacture and deliver 100 million doses of their Coronavirus vaccine candidate," Trump said at a White House news conference. "The federal government will own these vaccine doses, we're buying them."

"We're on track to rapidly produce 100 million doses as soon as the vaccine is approved, and up to 500 million shortly thereafter, so we'll have 600 million doses," he added.

Moderna, in partnership with the US National Institutes of Health (NIH), is conducting Phase 3 clinical trials of a vaccine candidate and manufacturing of vaccine doses will take place while the trials are underway.

The vaccine, called mRNA-1273, is being developed by Moderna and the NIH's National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), which is led by Dr Anthony Fauci.

Fauci has said researchers are unlikely to know the efficacy of the vaccine before the end of the year at the earliest.

— AFP

## MAN DIES OF BUBONIC PLAGUE IN MONGOLIA

**Ulaanbaatar, Aug. 12:** Bubonic plague has killed a man in western Mongolia, the country's health ministry said Wednesday, the latest in a handful of cases to emerge there and in neighbouring China this year.

At least one person dies of the plague every year in the landlocked Asian country, where the rare bacterial disease is usually spread by fleas clinging to the hair of the marmots native to the region.

The government has responded with campaigns to discourage people from eating the large rodents.

Officials said a man died on Tuesday night in the latest case, which is still to be confirmed by laboratory tests.

More than 70 people in close contact with the 42-year-old, who had bought two dead marmots before he fell ill, will now be tested and undergo quarantine. It comes weeks after a 15-year-old boy also succumbed to the disease in a neighbouring province.

Health officials in China have reported two deaths from its side of the border this month — one from bubonic plague, and another caused by the pharyngeal plague.

— AFP

## Pak passes law to put more curbs on banned outfits

SHAFAQAT ALI | DC ISLAMABAD, AUG. 12

Pakistan's National Assembly passed with a majority vote amendments to the Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997 to put more restrictions on banned outfits as the country continues to take measures to curb terror financing and money laundering.

The new law imposes a restriction on giving loans or financial assistance to people affiliated with banned outfits. Banks have been barred from issuing credit cards to banned people, and their wealth, properties and assets can be seized without notice. Weapon licences issued earlier will be revoked and weapons with old licences will be confiscated. Anyone carrying such arms will be punished and no new licences will be issued to them.

The government has also decided to impose a fine of Rs50 million on people involved in terror activities. Pakistan seeks to get onto the Financial Action Task Force (FATF)'s White List from its Grey List.

The FATF will be deciding Pakistan's fate in October and it depends on whether it can comply with a list of measures it had given to curb terror financing and money laundering in the country.

The global watchdog for illicit financial activities had put Pakistan on its Grey List in June 2018 because of weaknesses in the country's Anti-Money Laundering (AML) and Countering Financing of Terrorism (CFT) laws.

The Grey List refers to countries or jurisdictions under increased monitoring because of strategic AML and CFT deficiencies. After being placed on the Grey List, Pakistan had developed an action plan with the FATF to address those deficiencies, but fell short of the targets.

Law Minister Farogh Naseem said it was a historic day that the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) related legislation is being carried out today with consensus in the larger interest of the country.

He said: "Whitening the economy and checking terror financing is important to take the country forward on the path of development. It is also our aim to simplify the legislation and ensure protection of fundamental rights of the people."

## Protests smaller on 3rd night in Belarus

**Minsk, Aug. 12:** Authorities in Belarus said Wednesday that post-election protests were getting smaller, after police violently put down a third night of demonstrations.

Protesters gathered in Minsk and other cities on Tuesday night to contest strongman President Alexander Lukashenko's disputed victory in Sunday's election, after main challenger Svetlana Tikhonovskaya left the country for Lithuania.

With significant parts of central Minsk blocked off by riot police, they were unable to gather in large crowds as on previous

## PAK FM TERMS NAB OFFICE CLASH A DRAMA

**Islamabad, Aug. 12:** Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi on Wednesday termed the clash outside National Accountability Bureau (NAB) office on Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) vice president Maryam Nawaz's appearance as a drama.

Speaking in the National Assembly, the minister asked about the presence of stones in the car: "I don't want to disturb the assembly decorum by discussing yesterday's scuffle between police and PML-N workers," he added. He said that including name of PML-N lawmaker Rana Tanveer Hussain in FIR without reason was not right as he was in the session and has no hand in the clash.

The reaction came day after a clash erupted between outraged PML-N workers and police as Maryam Nawaz reached the NAB office in a case pertaining to illegal transfer of 180 acres of land in Raiwind.

## BRIBE: PUNJAB CM APPEARS BEFORE NAB

**Islamabad, Aug. 12:** Pakistan Punjab Chief Minister Usman Buzdar appeared before the National Accountability Bureau Lahore on Wednesday to answer questions on illegally awarding a liquor licence to a hotel.

He allegedly received a Rs 50 million bribe to force the Excise and Taxation Department to violate the law. "I will go in and defend myself on my own," Buzdar said before the appearance. "Whatever happens according to the law will happen."

The CM did not want party leaders or provincial cabinet members accompanying him to the NAB office. He chose to travel without government protocol when he left Chief Minister House.

Mr Buzdar's hearing comes a day after PML-N vice-president Maryam Nawaz was set to appear before the NAB to respond to a case of alleged illegal transfer of government land.



Hassan Rouhani

## US arms ban push will fail, hopes Iran

**Tehran, Aug. 12:** Iran's President has expressed "great hopes" Wednesday that a US bid to extend an arms embargo on his country will fail, warning of consequences if the UN Security Council backs it. Rouhani's remarks came after Iran's ambassador to the United Nations said the US would have to redraft its proposed resolution on the issue after being "rebuffed" by Security Council members.

The ban on selling weapons to Iran is set to be progressively eased from October under the terms of Resolution 2231, which blessed the Iran nuclear deal that world powers agreed in July 2015.

But a UN embargo on materials and technology that Iran could use for its ballistic missile program

is to remain in place until 2023. The European Union has said it will continue to enforce its own embargo against Iran after the lifting of the first UN embargo.

Under the accord officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, Iran committed to limiting its nuclear programme in exchange for sanctions relief.

The JCPOA has been on life-support since the US withdrew from it and reimposed unilateral sanctions in 2018.

Iran has since taken small but escalatory steps away from compliance with the agreement as it presses for the sanctions relief it was promised.

"We have great hopes that America will fail," Rouhani said.

— AFP

## Taiwan visit: China warns US against playing with fire

**Taipei, Aug. 12:** China warned Washington not to "play with fire" on Wednesday as a US delegation wrapped up a historic trip to the self-ruled island of Taiwan. Beijing has been infuriated by the highest-profile visit in decades to Taiwan, which it sees as part of its territory, as US-China relations plunge to a record low over a range of issues from trade to

military and the Coronavirus pandemic.

Health chief Alex Azar finished a three-day visit to Taiwan, during which he criticised China's handling of the pandemic and visited the shrine of a former Taiwan president hated by the Communist Party leadership.

Beijing slammed the visit Wednesday and said it "firmly opposes official

exchanges between the US and Taiwan under any pretext". "On issues involving China's core interests, some people in the US must not harbour illusions, those who play with fire will get burned," said foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian at a regular press briefing.

Beijing insists that Taiwan is part of "one China".

— AFP

## MILITARY HONOUR

Kin spent decades trying to get the recognition for Sheean

## Oz sailor feted 77 yrs after saving crew

**Wellington, Aug. 12:** An Australian war hero will be awarded the nation's top military honor more than 77 years after he was killed while saving some of his shipmates.

Britain's Queen Elizabeth II has approved awarding the Victoria Cross to sailor Edward "Teddy" Sheean, Australia's Governor-General David Hurley announced Wednesday.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison said Sheean, who was just 18 when he died, sacrificed his life for his shipmates during World War II.

"After the order was

given for the crew of the HMAS Armidale to abandon ship, Japanese aircraft strafed the Australian sailors who were overboard," Morrison said in a statement. "Sheean then turned back, made for the gun, strapped himself in, and returned fire to the Japanese. He fought to the very end."

A week after the ship was sunk near East Timor in December 1942, 49 crew members were rescued, Morrison said. Many of them owed their lives to the actions of Sheean.

Sheean's family have spent decades trying to get

● Britain's Queen Elizabeth II has approved awarding the Victoria Cross to sailor Edward "Teddy" Sheean, Australia's Governor-General David Hurley. Prime Minister Scott Morrison said Sheean, who was just 18 when he died, sacrificed his life for his shipmates during World War II.

him the recognition they believe he deserves. He was given a lower award after his death, but two inquiries in recent years

were divided on whether he should be awarded the Victoria Cross.

An expert panel convened to settle the case found compelling new evidence in favor of giving Sheean the top honour and that he had been the victim of substantial injustice due to government missteps and rigid policies in the previous handling of the case. On the basis of that report, Morrison earlier this week recommended to Queen Elizabeth II that the sailor be given the award. "This is a momentous day for the Sheean family," Hurley told reporters in

Canberra. "In my conversations with them, their pride and emotion was very evident."

Morrison said all Australians could share in the joy of the award as the nation celebrates the 75th anniversary of victory in the Pacific. "Teddy Sheean never saw war's end, never saw the peace he helped secure, and did not enjoy the long life that many of his crew mates did," Morrison said. "That was the price he paid for his valour." Hurley said a ceremony would be held within the next few months.

— AP



quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	38,369.63	-0.10
Nifty 50	11,308.40	-0.12
S&P 500*	3,381.80	1.44
Dollar (₹)	74.83	-0.06
Pound Sterling (₹)	97.64	0.21
Euro (₹)	87.89	0.15
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	52,946	1,228 2.31
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	45.13	0.63
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.884	-0.019
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.678	0.020

Mphasis gets US patent for its AI system

Mphasis said it has recently been granted a US patent for its artificial intelligence system for tracking, managing and analysing data from unstructured data sources. "The patented system enables enterprises to draw actionable insights at real-time from enterprise data sources such as e-mails, call centre transcripts, insurance policy documents, broker submissions, bank statements and customer complaints among others," it said.

23 firms attend meet on running private trains



As many as 23 firms, including Bombardier, Alstom, Siemens and GMR, have shown interest in running private trains and attended a pre-application meeting on Wednesday as a first step, the Railways said. Other attendees included BEML, IRCTC, BHEL, CAF, Medha Group, Sterlite, Bharat Forge, JKB Infrastructure and Titagarh Wagons, it said. The Railways has invited 12 Request for Qualifications.

Fuel demand declines by 11.7% in July

India's fuel demand is beginning to flatline after showing signs of returning to life, as consumption dipped 11.7 per cent in July, official data showed. Fuel consumption, a barometer of economic activity, had slumped by over 45 per cent in April as the nationwide lockdown halted most vehicular traffic and shut industries. However, with easing of lockdown restrictions, the demand picked up in May and June.

Ford brings in top-end Freestyle SUV at ₹7.69 lakh

Ford expanded its Freestyle model lineup with a top-of-the-line Freestyle Flair compact SUV variant at an introductory price of Rs 7.69 lakh for petrol variant and Rs 8.79 lakh at Delhi showroom for the diesel to cash in on the festive season. The petrol engine in the new Ford Freestyle Flair is a 3-cylinder, 1.2-litre, TiVCT unit delivering 96PS of maximum power and 120Nm of peak torque.

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Say imports will hit viability of gardens Tea growers oppose move to reduce duty

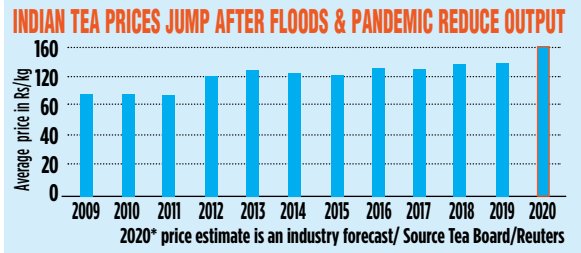
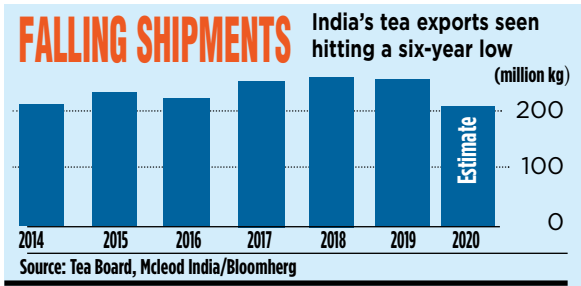
SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, AUG. 12

Amidst reports of traders seeking duty-free import of tea, growers across the country have opposed it and warned the government that any such move will destabilise the sector. The Consultative Committee of Plantation Associations (CCPA), the apex body of tea associations in India, urged the government not to reduce import duty on tea "as any move in that direction will disturb the equilibrium of the industry".

"A duty reduction will lead to erosion of domestic prices and subsequently affect the economic viability of the tea gardens and livelihood of lakhs of people," CCPA chairman Vivek Goenka said in a letter to commerce minister Piyush Goyal. The United Planters Association of South India (Upasi) too has maintained that it will be counter-productive for the tea growing sector. According to Upasi president A. R. Nagappan, the industry employs 2.12 lakh growers and 11.65 lakh workers, of which more than 70 per cent are women.

The tea growers have made such requests following reports that tea traders and packing companies had asked the government to allow duty-free imports after tea prices touched new highs in the recent auctions.

After eight years of price stagnation, average tea



prices in the country's auctions have risen by 40-60 per cent during the April-June period due to strong buyer demand and a huge shortfall.

According to the Indian Tea Association, the country has already registered a 120-140 million kg shortfall in production. Heavy rains and the absence of tea pickers due to the lockdowns had hammered production and sent tea prices spiraling to records.

In contrast, tea prices in Kenya and Vietnam have fallen due to increased production and traders are planning to import from these countries. Tea imports currently attract duty of 100 per cent. However, under the Free Trade Agreement, tea can be imported from Nepal without duty and from Sri

Lanka at a concessional duty of 7.5 per cent.

CCPA says reduction in import duty will see cheap tea flooding the market and it will have disastrous effects on prices. It also wanted tea imported into the country to be checked for the prescribed FSSAI quality norms and compliances.

According to Nagappan, the price increase in the last few auctions does not substantiate the duty reduction argument as the price increase for the period January to June in South India was lower by 9.4 per cent.

Further, India produces tea in surplus and exports around 18-20 per cent of its production. A disruption in the tea industry will also deprive export revenues to the country.

UK plunges into deep recession, 'hard times'

ADITI KHANNA LONDON, AUG. 12

The UK economy plunged into a deep recession as it shrank 20.4 per cent between April and June at the height of the coronavirus lockdown, according to new figures released on Wednesday.

Reacting to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) data, UK chancellor Rishi Sunak admitted that it indicated that the hard times he had warned about are here and that many more jobs will be lost.

"I've said before that hard times were ahead, and today's figures confirm that hard times are here," Sunak told 'Sky News'.

"Hundreds of thousands of people have already lost their jobs, and sadly in the coming months many more will. But while there are difficult choices to be made ahead, we will get through this, and I can assure people that nobody will be left without hope or opportunity," he said.

It marks the first time in 11 years that the UK has tipped into a recession, which is defined by two consecutive three-month periods of falling GDP. The latest GDP figures showed that it fell by 20.4 per cent between April to June, following a drop of 2.2 per cent between January to March. —PTI

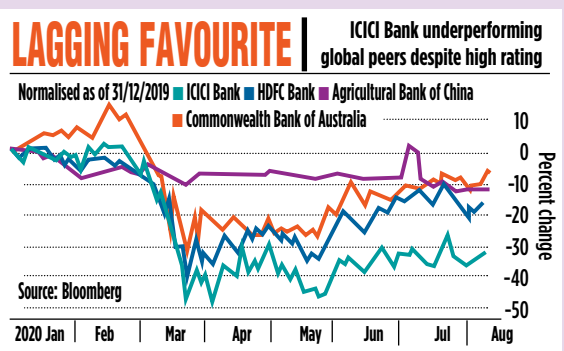
ICICI Bank: Stock favoured by world's analysts lags behind

NUPUR ACHARYA AUG. 12

ICICI Bank Ltd is the world's highest rated banking stock, but its performance hasn't exactly been stellar.

The \$32-billion lender has 56 buy recommendations, and its consensus rating of 4.95 on a scale of 5 is the highest among the 50 largest banks globally, data compiled by Bloomberg show. But its share price is down 32 per cent this year, ranking it in the bottom four of that same group.

Coronavirus lockdowns and low interest rates have taken a toll on global financial stocks, and Indian banks are still reeling from a crisis among the nation's smaller shadow lenders. Even so, attractive valuations... should stand ICICI Bank's shares in good stead, said Sanjiv Bhasin, executive vice president at IIFL Securities Ltd. "The valuation of ICICI Bank gives a lot of comfort as it has



been an underperformer," Bhasin said.

The second-largest public lender is trading at about 1.9 times book value, cheaper than the NSE Nifty Bank Index's 2.7 times. Its earnings have held up, with a 36 per cent rise in net income for the June quarter, helped by the sale of stakes in its insurance subsidiaries.

While the bank reported higher provisions against bad loans due to the pandemic, it plans to raise as much as Rs 15,000 crore through a share sale to institutions to boost its

balance sheet. A number of peers have undertaken such financial buffer building this year, and passive flow is seen helping to support ICICI Bank's stock.

"Funds that track the MSCI, FTSE, Nifty 50 and Sensex indexes will need to buy around 40.8 million shares (10 per cent of the share issued in the qualified institutional placement) over the next couple of weeks and the stock could be supported," Brian Freitas, an analyst for Smartkarma, wrote in a note. —Bloomberg

DGFT amends policy on Advance Authorisation

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, AUG. 12

After the Delhi High Court ruled against DGFT issuing public notice last year withdrawing Advance Authorisation for export of gold jewellery, medallions and coins, the foreign trade authority has amended the Foreign Trade Policy and re-issued the notification. The DGFT on August 10 issued a notification disal-

lowing advance authorisation scheme where the export item is gold medallions and coins, gold jewellery and articles manufactured by fully mechanised process.

The DGFT had issued a public notice on the same matter on September 26, 2019. However, M. D. Overseas, an exporter of gold jewellery and medallions, had filed a petition with the Delhi High Court

challenging the withdrawal of the scheme.

As per DGFT rules, Advance Authorisation is issued to allow duty-free import of inputs which are physically incorporated in the export product. The rules allow DGFT to exclude any product.

The Delhi High Court in May 2020 ruled that the public notice issued was beyond DGFT's power jurisdiction and authority.

HC notice to Guj. over factories ordinance

Ahmedabad, Aug. 12: The Gujarat High Court on Tuesday issued a notice to the state government on a petition challenging the Factories (Gujarat Amendment) Ordinance, 2020, calling it "violative" of the basic human rights of factory workers.

The ordinance, promulgated last month, seeks to withdraw protections given to factory workers with regards to their health, safety, hygienic working conditions and working hours, said the petition filed by the Gujarat Mazdoor Sabha (GMS).

A division bench of Justices R. M. Chhaya and I.J. Vora issued notice to the state government returnable on September 3.

The GMS said the amendment (through the ordinance) to the Factories Act, 1948, by the state government seeks to "withdraw all sorts of protections given to the workers employed to the extent of

40 in the power-aided factories, and 20 in the factories running without the aid of power."

As per the ordinance, such industrial units stand excluded from the definition of factory under the Act and safeguards provided to workers under the legislation shall not be applicable to them, the petition said. There are a large number of such factories in Gujarat, it said.

Section 106B of the ordinance authorises the government to make any or all offences under the Act "compoundable," making it "toothless," and making employer "immune to penal actions for violating provisions in respect of workers' health and hygiene, safety, hazardous processes, welfare, working hours," it said.

"Ultimately, workmen employed in the factory would be forced labour which is prohibited under Article 23 of the Constitution," it said. —PTI

Foxconn: China's days as world's factory are over

DEB WU AUG. 12

A key supplier to Apple Inc and a dozen other tech giants plans to split its supply chain between the Chinese market and the US, declaring that China's time as factory to the world is finished because of the trade war.

Hon Hai Precision Industry Co chairman Young Liu said it's gradually adding more capacity outside of China, the main base of production for gadgets from iPhones to Dell desktops and Nintendo Switches. The proportion outside the country is now at 30 per cent, up from 25 per cent last June.

That ratio will rise as the company—known also as Foxconn—moves more manufacturing to Southeast Asia and other regions to avoid escalating tariffs on Chinese-made

goods headed to US markets. "No matter if it's India, Southeast Asia or the Americas, there will be a manufacturing ecosystem in each," Liu said, adding that while China will still play a key role in Foxconn's manufacturing empire, the country's "days as the world's factory are done."

The Taiwanese company reported better-than-expected net income of NT\$22.9 billion (\$778 million) for the quarter ended in June, boosted by increased demand for iPads and MacBooks.

Foxconn has been shaking up its traditionally China-focused operations. Hon Hai is among Apple assembly partners that plan to expand operations in India, potentially helping the iPhone maker grow its presence in the country of 1.3 billion and shift some of the US company's supply chain out-

side of China as ties between Washington and Beijing fray.

Chinese rivals are also posing a growing challenge. Local electronics titan Luxshare Precision Industry Co is poised to become the first Chinese homegrown iPhone assembler after sealing a deal in July to buy an Apple handset production plant from Wistron Corp. While Hon Hai will keep assembly orders for premium iPhones, Luxshare will eat into the business for mid-to-entry-level Apple handsets, Fubon Securities analyst Arthur Liao wrote in a July 23 note.

Foxconn will work on its component business to maintain tech leadership and it also benefits from its long-term relationship with Apple, Liu said in response to analysts' questions about Foxconn's competitive strategy. —Bloomberg

Things you're doing wrong when buying stocks on your own

EDWARD ROBINSON AUG. 12

Lena Birse is a stay-at-home mom who loves buying tech stocks during market crashes. Jay Smith is a former pro gamer who switched from cryptocurrencies to blue chips. Heloise Greeff is a data scientist who uses machine learning to analyse trading patterns. And Mik Mullins is a retired hotel executive who's betting the market is about to plunge.

These four amateur traders use different approaches but have one thing in common: They're killing it in one of the wildest markets in memory, with returns ranging from 20 to 60 per cent this year.

While many institutional investors bailed out of the market in the early stages of the pandemic, retail investors have piled in and pocketed big gains, especially in surging tech stocks. The US digital brokerage Robinhood signed up 3 million new users in the first five months of the year, giving it 13 million total customers.

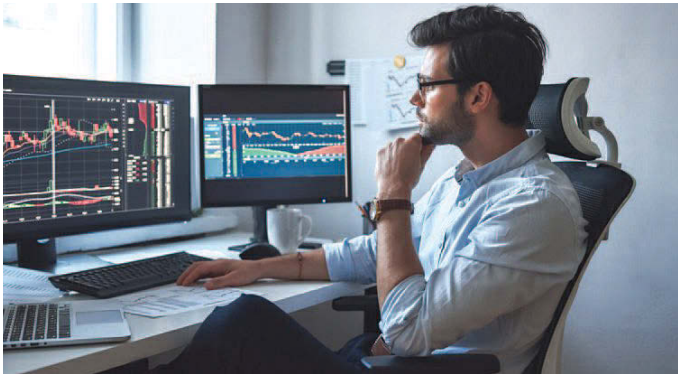
But playing the market is fraught with risks. To learn

how to avoid pitfalls, Bloomberg News picked the brains of these four top performers on eToro, a digital trading platform regulated by the UK's Financial Conduct Authority. E\*Trade lets people copy the trades of investors with proven track records, like this quartet.

They all believe newcomers make mistakes by not investing for the long term and by not diversifying their portfolios with at least 30 well-researched names. Here are the other mistakes they spotted.

**Jumping In Without Testing Out Trading Strategies:** When Heloise Greeff decided to plunge into the stock market in 2016, she did what any good scientist does—she experimented. Greeff used a "demo account" on eToro to execute simulated trades with \$100,000 of fake money. She discovered straight away that trying to time the market and trade in and out of positions everyday was a bad idea.

Greeff loves looking for patterns in oceans of market data. When the S&P 500 Index and other benchmarks were hitting all-time highs late last year, the



data was sending her a powerful signal: It was time to retreat. "I am a conservative trader so I liquidated 60 per cent of the positions in my portfolio, and while I missed the highs of January, I had peace of mind," she says. Since then, Greeff has waded back in. She's up around 20 per cent this year.

**Chasing Hyped Stocks Instead of Doing Research:** After dropping out of school at age 14, Jay Smith sought glory on the virtual playing fields of eSports. He became smitten with Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies, as well as solar energy stocks.

When the digital coin bubble popped in 2018, Smith's portfolio fell almost 54 per cent and he learned a painful lesson in the dangers of hype.

These days, the 32-year-old's bets are a far less racy mix: Chipmaker AMD and Microsoft, and this year he started buying shares in Home Depot and Lowe's, the home improvement giants. He does his homework on companies. "I spend a large amount of time reading product user manuals and watching launch events on YouTube. A solar company I follow recently held a training day online, so I watched to see how

they install their equipment." He's up about 50 per cent this year.

**Making Big Bets Instead of Starting Small:** A few years ago, after Lena Birse and her husband sold their heating business in Bristol, they decided to invest the windfall in stocks. Birse balked at paying fees to a money manager. She started small, buying modest stakes in household names, such as the UK retailer Tesco. Eventually, she grew confident enough to switch to high-octane stocks.

The mother of two teenagers splurged on a beachfront dream house on the Mediterranean and a London flat.

**Investing Money You Need in Five Years:** Mik Mullins says he felt like a blind, drunk monkey stumbling in the dark when he started investing in the early 2000s. Eventually, Mullins, a British expat in Singapore, found his footing by getting in early on companies that were disrupting global industries, like Facebook and Zillow. In 2012, he retired at the age of 42 from his profession as a hotel marketing consultant to tend

his portfolio. And he advised friends to follow one primary rule: Never invest money that you're going to need for big-ticket items such as a house or college tuition. Mullins is a true believer in investing for the long term. He doesn't even like to look at his portfolio more than once a week.

**Obsessively Checking Your Portfolio:** It can be tempting to keep looking at the daily swings in your stocks' prices, but if you do this every day, it spurs panicky trades and losses.

Over time, Birse said she built a tolerance for risk. After the pandemic hit, she resisted the urge to panic. Instead, she bided her time and prepared to add to her positions in longtime "winners" like Shopify, the Canadian e-commerce firm that's skyrocketed 148 per cent this year.

"I used to turn off the computer during selloffs," says Birse, 50. "But then I wanted to be more active, more aggressive, so in March I stole my nerves, waited three weeks, and then it was time to go shopping. It felt like the sale of the century."

Her portfolio is up 61 per cent. —Bloomberg





## SHORT TAKES

## Russia pays fine to escape ban

**Moscow:** Russia paid \$6.3 million to World Athletics on Wednesday to escape expulsion from track and field's world governing body.

The federation, known as RusAF had a Saturday deadline to pay a \$5 million fine and \$1.3 million in costs to World Athletics. That followed the alleged use of forged medical documents to give an athlete an alibi for being unavailable for drug testing. RusAF was threatened with expulsion after it missed an initial July 1 deadline to pay.

"World Athletics can confirm it has today received the funds to settle RusAF's two outstanding payments," World Athletics said in a statement.

The Russian Sports Ministry put up the funds after RusAF said it couldn't pay. The ministry said on Wednesday that it gave RusAF "a one-time subsidy for developing the sport, including clearing the debt to World Athletics," but didn't specify how much money has been transferred to the Russian sporting organisation. — AP

## India gets special Olympics grant

**New Delhi:** India will be among six countries to benefit from a \$25 million grant commissioned by the UAE under the Unified Champion School worldwide programme with an aim to empower intellectually disabled children, the Special Olympics Bharat announced on Wednesday. Special Olympics Bharat founder Air Marshall Deniz Keeloor announced the grant made for the programme by the Crown Prince of the UAE, which will also benefit his organisation.

"The Crown Prince (of the UAE) has granted \$25m for the Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools programme worldwide which will be used in six countries, including India. This 4-year programme will help build an inclusive society," Air Marshall Keeloor said on the grant.

Besides India, the grant will also support the Unified Champion School programme in countries such as Argentina, Egypt, Rwanda, Romania and Pakistan. — PTI

## Sachin to virtually flag off marathon

**Mumbai:** Cricketing icon Sachin Tendulkar will virtually flag off the IDBI Federal Future Fearless Marathon to be held on Saturday. Packaged in a new concept to overcome the challenges posed by the unprecedented pandemic and to celebrate India's 73rd Independence Day, the marathon will aim to make every Indian feel free while also instilling positivity in each of them during these trying times.

"Mental and physical fitness have always been important and is even more so today. It is wonderful to see enthusiastic runners registering for the Marathon. I wish them well, as they exercise precautions and follow lockdown instructions while running towards their fitness goals," Sachin Tendulkar, the Brand Ambassador of IDBI Federal Life Insurance, said. Organised by NEB Sports, over 6000 runners have already registered for the marathon across the four categories — Full Marathon (42.2k), Half Marathon (21.1k), 10k and 5k.

## RIDERS BRACE FOR AUSTRIAN GP IN RAIN

**Spielberg, Austria:** Forecasts are predicting a wet and wild Austrian Grand Prix at the Red Bull Ring as Alex Marquez and Stefan Bradl look to launch a rejuvenated challenge.

The MotoGP World Championship arrives in Austria for the first of two races at the Red Bull Ring hot off the back of the Czech GP. It proved to be a trying weekend for the Repsol Honda Team, but both riders are ready to put the weekend behind them and focus on adapting their respective Repsol Honda RC213V machines to the Austrian circuit. — Agencies

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## COVID HITS IPL

## Rajasthan Royals fielding coach tests positive

**New Delhi, Aug. 12:** Rajasthan Royals' fielding coach Dishant Yagnik has tested positive for Covid-19, the IPL team announced on Wednesday, making it the first such case among the league franchises ahead of their departure next week to this year's tournament venue, the UAE.

The 13th edition of Indian Premier League is set to take place in the UAE from September 19 to November 10. The event was moved out of India due to Covid-19 cases.

"Rajasthan Royals would like to inform that their fielding coach Dishant Yagnik has tested positive for Covid-19," the franchise said in a statement.

"The test was undertaken keeping in mind that the team members need to assemble in Mumbai next week for their flight to the UAE. The franchise implemented an extra test for all players, support staff and management travelling to the UAE in addition to the two tests recommended by BCCI," the statement added.

This is the first case among the IPL contingent. Yagnik is currently in his hometown Udaipur and has been advised to get admitted to a hospital for the mandatory 14-day quarantine.

After the completion of the two-week quarantine, Yagnik will be undergoing two tests as per the BCCI's Covid protocols and will be allowed back into the team only after his reports return negative.

After his arrival in UAE, Yagnik will have to stay in self-isolation for the next six days and will also undergo three more Covid-19 tests. — PTI



Dishant Yagnik, fielding coach of the Rajasthan Royals, in this file photo.

## FRESH BID FOR SPONSORS

**New Delhi, Aug. 12:** Education technology company Unacademy, which is already one of IPL's sponsors, is eyeing the league's title sponsorship rights now and is set to submit its bid to replace Chinese mobile phone company Vivo this season.

A BCCI official confirmed that Unacademy has picked up the bid papers but refrained from making any comments beyond that. "I can confirm that Unacademy has shown interest and picked the bid papers. I have heard they will be submitting a bid and are pretty serious. So Patanjali if they bid, will have competition," the senior official said.

The BCCI is now looking at a lesser value — between ₹300 to ₹350 crore — for a period of four months and 13 days. — PTI

## CSK want MSD to play till 2022

**New Delhi, Aug. 12:** Chennai Super Kings CEO Kasi Vishwanathan feels their talisman Mahendra Singh Dhoni, who has not played any competitive cricket since last year's World Cup semifinal, will be part of the franchise in 2021 and 2022 IPLs.

The 39-year-old Dhoni is set for a return to competitive cricket in the upcoming IPL, to be played in the UAE from September 19 to November 10.

"We can expect MS Dhoni to be part of both (IPL 2020 and 2021) and probably for even the next year 2022," Vishwanathan was quoted as saying by an Indian news media outlet.

"I am getting updates through the media only, saying he has been training in Jharkhand in indoor nets. But we don't have to worry about the skipper, boss. We don't worry about him at all."

"He knows his responsibilities and he will take care of himself and the team," he added.

N. Srinivasan, the vice-chairman and managing director of India Cements, owners of the CSK franchise, in January said that Dhoni would be retained by the team for the 2021 IPL mega-auction.

Speculations were rife about Dhoni's future since the 2019 World Cup as he failed to get a central BCCI contract. — PTI

## DADDY'S ARMY READY FOR IPL, SAYS BALAJI

**Chennai, Aug. 12:** The presence of many players who are deep into their 30s is a boon and not bane for Chennai Super Kings as they head into the 13th IPL after the long Coronavirus-forced break, the team's bowling coach L Balaji said on Wednesday.

Mahendra Singh Dhoni, 39, is getting ready to lead the three-time winners in the upcoming edition of IPL, scheduled to be held in the UAE from September 19 to November 10.

Asked if the senior players would find it difficult to get back into the groove, Balaji responded in the negative.

"I don't think it's going to be that difficult, because all your life you have played this sport. So many years of understanding will come in handy to get back to your best," Balaji said.

"Experience will definitely be important. It has been proven in big tournaments like IPL."

Besides the skipper, the franchise, among others, has in its ranks veterans such as Shane Watson and Dwayne Bravo. — PTI



Lucas Ocampos (centre) of Sevilla celebrates after scoring against Wolverhampton Wanderers during their UEFA Europa League quarterfinal at the MSV Arena in Duisburg on Wednesday. Sevilla won 1-0. — AFP

## EUROPA | LEAGUE

## Shakhtar bump Basel, in semis

**Gelcenkirchen (Germany), Aug. 12:** Shakhtar Donetsk routed Basel 4-1 to set up a Europa League semifinal against Inter Milan.

Four Brazilians scored for the Ukrainian side before Ricky van Wolfswinkel netted a consolation goal for the Swiss side.

Junior Moraes put Shakhtar ahead in the second minute by steering in a header from Marlos' corner. It was the Brazilian-born Ukraine forward's 25th goal across all competitions, coming after he scored two against Wolfsburg in the second leg of their rescheduled Round-of-16 tie last week.

Taison grabbed Shakhtar's second with a deflected shot after a fine flowing team move in the 22nd.

Raoul Petretta produced a clearance to deny Moraes from the rebound.

Alan Patrick's penalty in the 75th effectively sealed the Ukrainian side's place in the semifinals.

Shakhtar will play Inter

in Dsseldorf on August 17. The final takes place in Cologne four days later.

## SEVILLA HUNT DOWN WOLVES TO MAKE LAST-4

A late header from Lucas Ocampos gave Sevilla a 1-0 win over Wolverhampton and a place in the Europa League semifinals.

After Raul Jimenez missed an early penalty for Wolves, Sevilla increasingly took control of the game. The five-time Europa League champion had seemingly endless set pieces around the Wolves penalty area and finally broke through when Ocampos headed in Eder Banegas's cross following a corner in the 88th minute.

Wolves forward Adama Traore earlier showed extraordinary pace in his 53rd club game of the season to sprint in behind the Sevilla defense, only for Diego Carlos to cut him down with a tackle from behind for the penalty.

Jimenez's spot-kick was barely off-center and pushed away by Yassine Bounou. — Agencies

## England out of Stokes for second Test vs Pak

**Southampton, Aug. 12:** England may have won the series opener against Pakistan but the absence of Ben Stokes leaves them with arguably the bigger selection headache going into Thursday's second Test at Southampton.

Pakistan were much the better side for much of last week's first Test at Old Trafford and, despite a second-innings collapse, were still favourites to win when they reduced England to 117-5 in pursuit of a target of 277.

But a sixth-wicket partnership of 139 between Chris Woakes (84 not out) and Jos Buttler (75) turned the tide as England went 1-0 up in a three-match series on Saturday.

Since England won with more than a day to spare in Manchester, it has been announced that star allrounder Stokes will miss the rest of the series as a result of travelling to New Zealand to be with his ill father.

A quad injury meant that the end of England's

## Live on TV

## SECOND TEST

England vs Pakistan from 3.30 pm on Sony SIX

## CHAMPIONS LEAGUE QUARTERFINAL

Lepizig vs Atletico Madrid from 12.30 am (Friday) on Sony Ten 2

2-1 series win over the West Indies last month — a campaign that marked international cricket's return from the Coronavirus lockdown — and the first Test against Pakistan saw vice-captain Stokes effectively deployed as a specialist batsman by skipper Joe Root.

Stokes, however, still took two important wickets on the third evening against Pakistan.

The obvious move for England would be to recall batsman Zak Crawley, who has missed out on the last two

● Hosts are left with a selection headache with star allrounder Ben Stokes out of the Southampton Test.

● Stokes has left for New Zealand to be with his ailing father and will miss the remainder of the series.

matches while an extra bowler has been deployed because of Stokes' injury problems.

Buttler underlined his skill in a run-chase last week but the wicketkeeper, by his own admission, had a poor match with the gloves. England do have the option to recall Ben Foakes, widely regarded as a better keeper, and play Buttler as a specialist batsman.

England are in the middle of a sequence of six Tests in seven weeks, a gruelling schedule that has seen them adopt a policy of rotating their quicks. — AFP

## HAFEEZ TO BE ISOLATED FOR GOLFING GOOF

**Southampton, Aug. 12:** The Pakistan Cricket Board is is furious at former captain Muhammad Hafeez for his apparent breach of the biosecurity protocol imposed by the England and Wales Cricket Board for the ongoing away series.

On Wednesday, Hafeez tweeted a picture of himself with an elderly lady from the golf course adjacent to the team hotel despite strict instructions that they shouldn't interact with anyone outside the bubble. A source said Hafeez's breach had upset everyone as all players had been told specifically to avoid interaction with anyone outside the bubble. — PTI

## ATM hope to be on the money

**Madrid, Aug. 12:** Atletico Madrid's triumph over Liverpool in March was a throwback to a more celebrated past under Diego Simeone but five months on and the Champions League offers them a very real opportunity in the present.

Knocking out the holders at Anfield may prove to be the first glimpse of a new era under Simeone, where the likes of Joao Felix, Marcos Llorente, Jose Gimenez and Jan Oblak push Atletico to challenge for major honours again.

Or it could be a last hurrah for the Simeone project, which some believe will never again scale the heights of their incredible Spanish league title win in 2014 or their runs to the Champions League finals in 2014 and 2016.

Either way, few believed Llorente's two goals in extra-time would be the start of something even more surprising, namely Simeone lifting the cup in May.

Certainly nobody anticipated football shutting down completely the following week, as nervousness turned to indignation about Atletico fans travelling to Anfield, before matches behind closed doors became matches postponed indefinitely.

And yet when football



Lyon's Memphis Depay controls the ball during a training session at the Groupama Stadium Training Centre in Decines-Charpieu, near Lyon, on Wednesday, eve of their UEFA Champions League quarterfinal match against Manchester City. — AFP

returned in June, Atletico were transformed. They went unbeaten in the 11 games after the resumption, to dispel concerns they could miss out on La

Liga's four.

They won seven matches and drew four; one of them against Barcelona at Camp Nou, which helped Real Madrid clinch the title.



D. J. Wilson of the Milwaukee Bucks goes for a basket during their NBA game against the Washington Wizards in Lake Buena Vista, Florida, on Wednesday. The Bucks won 126-113. — AP

## Portland edge past Mavericks

**Orlando, Aug. 12:** Damian Lillard exploded for 61 points on Tuesday as the Portland Trail Blazers roared towards a place in the NBA playoffs with a thrilling 134-131 win over the Dallas Mavericks.

Lillard — who had scored 51 points in a victory against the Philadelphia 76ers on Sunday — once again led from the front for Portland, who are now within touching distance of a postseason berth.

The Blazers talisman nailed a clutch three-pointer in the closing stages to level the score at 130-130 and then provided the assist that saw Portland take a 132-130 lead with just

under a minute remaining.

The win vaulted Portland above the Memphis Grizzlies into the eighth and final playoff spot in the Western Conference standings with 34 wins and 39 defeats.

The eighth — and ninth — placed teams in the West will advance to an elimination game this weekend to determine who claims the final postseason berth from the conference.

Lillard's 61-point effort made him only the second player in NBA history to score 60 points or more in three games during a single season, putting him alongside Wilt Chamberlain. — AFP