

NEW DELHI TUESDAY 11 AUGUST 2020



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TABLOID | 16

Swara Bhasker is turning to writing and is reportedly working on 3 film scripts

Sarvari: Dakshinayana
Tithi: Shravana Bahula
Saptami till 9.05 am
Star: Bharani till 12.54 am
(Wednesday)
Variyam: 8.48 am to 10.35
am
Durmuhurtam: 8.33 am to
9.24 am; 11.13 pm to 11.59
pm
Rahukalam: 3 pm to 4.30 pm
SUNSET TODAY 6.20 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.46 AM
MOONRISE TOMORROW 10.35 PM
MOONSET TODAY 11.17 AM

The court said that it would examine whether prima facie the statement amounts to contempt. The hearing, in this case, would now commence on August 17, the SC also said.

The case concerns Mr. Bhushan's comments on the judiciary during an interview to the *Tehelka* magazine in 2009.

The contempt case was taken on the basis of a complaint by senior advocate Harish Salve. This was in relation to a 2009 interview given by Bhushan to the *Tehelka* magazine. — Agencies

The families of the missing persons — Intiaz Ahmed, Abrar Ahmed Khan and Abrar Yusuf — had on Sunday lodged an FIR at Peeri Police Post in Rajouri that their kin are missing since July 17. The trio, aged 18, 21 and 26 years respectively, had last called their families on July 17 informing them they had reached Shopian.

IN BRIEF

2 held for supplying illegal weapons

New Delhi: The Crime Branch of the Delhi Police have arrested two men, including a government official, who allegedly supplied illegal weapons to criminals, officials said on Monday. The accused has been identified as Insar Khan (31), a resident of Baghpat in Uttar Pradesh and his associate Paras Chopra (36) based in Haryana's Karnal, they said. Police said Khan was working as Junior Statistical Officer in the Ministry of Labour and Employment in the national capital. Being in a government job, he thought no one would doubt him. So he collected weapons from UP and supplied them to criminals in Delhi, they said. DCP (crime) Bhisham Singh said, "We received information on August 4 that illegal arms are being supplied from Uttar Pradesh to Delhi and a man was coming near India Gate to deliver a consignment to criminals. Our teams conducted raids and arrested Insar Khan."

Woman consumes toilet cleaner, dies

Noida: A 38-year-old married woman died in her apartment in Uttar Pradesh's Greater Noida allegedly after consuming toilet cleaner, police said on Monday. The incident was reported to the local Biskrah police around 2.30 am and the woman's husband was being questioned over the "mysterious" conditions of the death, officials said. The couple had got married around six years ago, the officials said. "According to the husband, the woman had consumed the toilet cleaner two days ago and died in the early hours of Monday. However, we have not found any evidence of her being taken to a hospital after the incident, leaving the situation mysterious," additional DCP, Central Noida, Ankur Aggarwal said. The woman's parents and brother live in Pune, where they are currently undergoing treatment for Covid. Once they recover, more details and their statement would be taken in the case, Aggarwal said.

Man arrested for fleeing with ₹60K

New Delhi: A 52-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly fleeing with ₹60,000 cash belonging to a media professional, who had gone to AIIMS for an eye operation, police said on Monday. The accused, Satish Kumar Dhama, worked as a nursing attendant at the hospital and was hired through a placement agency. He belongs to Haridwar in Uttarakhand, they said. According to the police, the patient went to the AIIMS on July 25 for an eye operation. Before going in for the procedure, he handed over ₹60,000 to Dhama, who was his medical attendant at the hospital, they said. The patient asked him to wait till his procedure was over but instead, the accused decamped with the money, the police said.

Man held for duping people of ₹1.36 lakh

New Delhi: A man has been arrested for allegedly duping people through his fraudulent finance schemes on the pretext of giving them higher returns, police said on Monday. Sudhir Parkash Sharma and his associates targeted people living in slum clusters here and lured them to make smaller investments with them on daily basis. They convinced them to open FDs and invest ₹100 daily basis for a year to get Rs. 41,400 after 12 months of the scheme. The fraudulent schemes were being run by the gang through their fake company in Kalkaji, which has been operational since 2013, police said. Sharma and along with his associates have duped at least 25 people so far, they said. Elaborating on their modus operandi, DCP (South) Atul Kumar Thakur said "Initially, the gang members returned the maturity amount to win the trust and attract more investments into their schemes. But after collecting huge amount, they refuse to refund the amount." After duping people, they would close down their office and switch off their mobile phones, he said



NSUI protest against MHRD demanding fee waive off for 1 semester, postponement of all exams in all states in the wake of Covid pandemic in New Delhi on Monday. — PTI

Ambience Mall : CBI raids 4 locations over 'illegal' use of land

New Delhi, Aug. 10 : The CBI on Monday conducted searches at four locations after filing a case of alleged illegal conversion of residential land to raise the swanky Ambience Mall in Gurgaon against the company chairman, Raj Singh Gehlot, and others, officials said. The agency registered the FIR on the orders of the Punjab and Haryana High Court which had termed the mall illegal and handed over the probe to the central agency. The CBI has booked Chairman and Managing Director of the Ambience group Raj Singh Gehlot and companies Ambience Ltd and Ambience Developers and Infrastructure besides unidentified officials of Haryana Urban Development Authority (HUDA) and Town and Country Planning (TCP) departments. "The case is related to alleged illegal construction of commercial building at approximately 18.98 acre of land in Gurugram (Gurgaon, Haryana) by blatantly flouting the building by-laws and statutory provisions in collusion with others," CBI Spokesperson RK Gaur

said. The searches are spread at the residence of Gehlot in Hauz Khas, company office at Green Park in Delhi, HUDA office in Panchkula and TCP office in Sector 18, Chandigarh. The high court had sought a separate investigation by the CBI to probe alleged illegal actions, if any, and possible collusion between the builder and state authorities. The Ambience group runs Ambience Malls in NCR and luxury hotel The Leela Ambience Convention Centre among other such real estate properties. The petitioners had alleged before the high court that 18.98 acres of land on Delhi-Jaipur National Highway in Gurgaon earmarked for Ambience Lagoon Island Residential Complex was reduced to just 7.9 acres with a commercial complex erected on the remaining land. They had alleged that such violation of the builder-buyer agreement and provisions of Haryana Development and Regulation of Urban Area Act, 1975 was not possible without the collusion of officials and builders. — PTI

MBBS student jumps to death from roof of AIIMS hostel

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, AUG. 10

A 22-year-old medical student ended his life by jumping off the roof of a hostel in All India Institute of Medical Sciences on Monday evening here, police said. The 2018 batch MBBS student, who hailed from Bangalore, was admitted in the psychiatry ward of the hospital and was undergoing treatment for some mental health problem. He had taken an hours' break from the ward. He then apparently reached the hostel 19 roof from where he jumped, AIIMS sources said. The incident was reported to the police at around 6 pm. He jumped from the hostel roof and was moved to the Trauma Centre where he was declared dead during the course of treatment, said Atul Kumar Thakur, deputy commissioner of policer enquiry is underway, police said.

■ 707 new cases take tally to 1,46,134, death toll climbs to 4,131

Delhi defeating Covid, over 90% patients recovered: CM

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, AUG. 10

Chief minister Arvind Kejriwal, on Monday, said that over 90 per cent of the Covid-19 patients in the national capital have recovered so far while only seven per cent of the total cases are active.

The national capital, meanwhile, recorded 707 fresh coronavirus cases on Monday, taking the tally in the city to over 1.46 lakh while the death toll rose to 4,131. Twenty fatalities have been recorded in the last 24 hours. The total case count stands at 1,46,134.

Talking about the Delhi Model, Mr Kejriwal tweeted, "Slowly and steadily the people of Delhi are defeating corona."

The Delhi government claimed that despite opening up, the national capital has maintained its fight against corona. "Delhi's recovery rate is improving; positivity

71 corona cases reported in Noida, total count 6,016

Noida, Aug. 10: Uttar Pradesh's Gautam Buddha Nagar on Monday recorded 71 new coronavirus cases, pushing the district's infection numbers to 6,016, official data showed.

So far, the district has reported 43 infection deaths with the mortality rate hovering around 0.71 per cent, according to official statistics.

The number of active cases stood at 932 as 68 more patients were discharged since Sunday, according to the data

released by the UP Health Department for a 24-hour period.

Gautam Buddha Nagar stands 11th on the list of districts in the state in terms of active cases.

The maximum active cases are in Lucknow (6,337) followed by Kanpur Nagar (4,860), Varanasi (2,347), Allahabad (1,986), Bareilly (1,753), Gorakhpur (1,685), Jaunpur (1,065), Aligarh (1,279), Ghaziabad (989) and Azamgarh (953), according to the data. — PTI

ratio is decreasing and deaths have reduced. Most positive patients are recovering in home isolation and those with severe symptoms are getting timely treatment. Delhi

maintains high testing and bed availability," it said.

The number of beds occupied in Delhi hospitals has been stable for a few weeks. Promoting



Workers make arrangements at Red Fort for the Independence Day celebrations in New Delhi on Monday. — PTI

DU open book exam: Students complain of difficulty in uploading answer sheets

AGE CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs NEW DELHI, AUG 10

Delhi University's online open book examinations for final-year undergraduate courses began on Monday with many students complaining about receiving two question papers and difficulty in uploading answer sheets. The exams began at 7.30 am and are being held in three shifts. Zubair Khan, a student of School of Open Learning (SOL), said, "I had my Hindi exam today according to the date-sheet. When I opened the portal for downloading my question paper, I found that two question papers were uploaded — one of Hindi and another of the paper scheduled for August 13. I sent mails to the SOL but there was no response. I consulted a

professor who advised me to attempt the paper scheduled for today." Another student, Deepak Gupta, said he was not sure if he could successfully upload his answer sheets before the scheduled time of 11.30 am. "It was 11.28 am by the time I finished creating PDF files (of my answer sheets). I tried to upload them but they didn't get uploaded. I have mailed them to the designated ID but do not know whether they will be accepted," he added.

A student of B.Sc Physical Science, who did not wish to be identified, said that the paper was quite tough and in a situation, when classes could not happen properly, it was unjust for students.

Abha Dev Habib, a professor of Miranda House, said most of the students in her class did not get a confirmation mail after uploading their answer sheets. The students then mailed to the varsity website their answer sheets and got an auto-generated response.

Pankaj Garg, a professor of Rajdhani College, said that the main problem that students faced was in uploading the answer sheets.

"They faced problems in uploading PDF files and some of the students said that if they could upload answers to two questions, they could not upload the

answers to the third. They were not sure whether their answer sheets were uploaded. The college received answer sheets on email post 11.30 am, which was the scheduled time," he said.

Garg also said that teachers will face issues while evaluating answer sheets.

"There is a fair possibility that there would be swapping of the pages while scanning and uploading, this would disturb the sequence.... Teachers have to be very very careful in connecting all those pages which belongs to the same question," he added.

While scanning some pages may be blurred and it would be difficult to read them carefully and it would be more difficult to connect to the next page and hence the continuity of the answer would be lost, he added.

3 cops, 5 others arrested for robbing a firm at gunpoint

BHASKAR HARI SHARMA NEW DELHI, AUG. 10

Three Delhi police personnel, along with five others, have been arrested for allegedly robbing employees of a firm at gunpoint after barging into their office in Mahipalpur area.

According to sources, robbed articles and a pistol has been recovered from their possession.

One Naveen Sehrawat, director of STTPL Tradeserver Private Ltd, had lodged an FIR with the police alleging that four masked men barged into his office when he was busy working with others. The alleged men told him that they were the police. They then threatened the entire staff to hand over all valuables.

"Sehrawat resisted and asked them to show their I-card. This made them angry and one of them fished out a pistol while another slapped

him on his face. When his staff tried to call the police control number, they too were attacked. The accused threatened that they would open fire and snatched the valuables," said sources.

The employees of the victim raised an alarm and shouted for help. This panicked the robbers and three of them managed to flee by jumping off the balcony. One of them, who was later identified as Jai Kapoor, was held.

He was handed over to the local police and an FIR was registered. Following the investigation, eight accused were held and the robbed articles were recovered from them.

The policemen were identified as Sandeep Kumar, Manu Kumar, and Amit Kumar.

The police said that all the accused were remanded into judicial custody and further probe in the matter is ongoing.

45 malaria cases in city, 35 of dengue

New Delhi, Aug 10: Forty-five cases of malaria and 35 of dengue have been reported in the national capital this year till August 8, according to a municipal report released on Monday.

The commissioner of the South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) had recently issued an advisory on prevention and control of vector-borne diseases.

According to data shared by the SDMC, the nodal agency that tabulates data on vector-borne diseases for the entire city, 35 cases of dengue have been recorded in Delhi till August 8. — PTI

Cop killed as drunk 19-yr-old rams car into police vehicle

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, AUG. 10

A drunk youth rammed his car into a police patrol vehicle in north Delhi early Monday, killing a head constable and injuring his colleague, officials said. Tushar Gupta, 19, who was returning home after meeting a friend, crashed his Honda City into the 'Prakhar' van near Khalsa College around 1.30 am. The impact was so huge that the police vehicle overturned and skidded for nearly 15 feet on the road, a police official said.

Head Constable Wazir Singh was trapped in the van and had to be rescued by his colleague Amit and passers-by, deputy commissioner of police



Wazir Singh

(North) Monika Bhardwaj said. Singh was admitted to a hospital but succumbed during treatment, Bhardwaj said.

Amit, who was driving the patrol vehicle when Gupta crashed into it from the other side, has been discharged from hospital after receiving stitches on his hand, the deputy commissioner of police said.

Gupta, a resident of Model Town, also suffered injuries but has been arrested. His medical examination showed he was drunk at the time of the accident, police said.

Gupta was pursuing B.Com in Singapore and had returned to Delhi in March before lockdown.

His father is a businessman and owned a shop in Sadar Bazar, they said. A case under sections 304 (culpable homicide not amounting to murder), 279 (rash driving) and 337 (causing hurt by act of endangering life) of the Indian Penal Code has been registered, the deputy commissioner of policesaid.

Constables Singh and Amit were on night duty when the accident hap-

pened.

"I was driving the vehicle. My colleague was seated right beside me. As the traffic light turned green, I took a turn towards the university area and suddenly a car rammed into us from another side," Amit said.

"We were severely injured and my colleague got trapped inside the vehicle. Public came to our rescue. They first rescued my colleague and then we were rushed to a hospital where my colleague who had suffered serious injuries died during treatment," he said.

Amit, who lives with his family in Narela, joined Delhi police in 2018 and is deputed in the Police Control Room unit. Singh, who served the

force for over 25 years, was previously with the traffic unit but was transferred to the PCR unit in May-end this year, police said.

Singh is survived by his wife, two sons and mother who live in a village near Sonipat.

His elder son Vinay is a constable with Haryana police and lives in Gurgaon and the younger son is pursuing B.Com from a university in Rohtak. According to Delhi police, the national capital reported 2,164 accidents between January 1 till July 30 this year in which 557 people were killed and 1,908 were injured.

In July end, an on-duty ACP of the traffic police unit died in an accident near Rajokri flyover.

SHORT TAKES

Gold case: Swapan's bail petition rejected

Thiruvananthapuram: The NIA has rejected the bail plea of Swapna Suresh, the second accused in the gold smuggling case. The prosecution succeeded in convincing the Special Court that Swapna enjoyed huge influence both within the state government and UAE consulate. The court also didn't see anything wrong in invoking provisions of the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) which she had challenged. The court said the bail application was being rejected based on the case diary produced by NIA and other evidence that was produced in the court. The gold smuggling accused had told the NIA court that she acted on the instructions of the UAE consul general. Besides, she alleged that the consul general had left the country with 2 lakh US dollars using his diplomatic immunity.

Sanjay Dutt out of Lilavati Hospital

Mumbai: Actor Sanjay Dutt on Monday was discharged from the hospital, two days after he was admitted for breathlessness. The 61-year-old actor was taken to Lilavati Hospital on Saturday evening for full check-up, where he was also tested for Covid-19, which turned out to be negative. An official from Lilavati Hospital said that Sanjay Dutt was discharged around 3pm on Monday. He was later clicked outside his Bandra residence, where he waved to the waiting photographers and well-wishers. "He is doing well and there were no serious symptoms noted. Some necessary treatment for his medical evaluation was done," said hospital's chief operating officer Dr V. Ravishankar. Reports claim that the star had fluctuating oxygen saturation levels and complained of chest discomfort.

2nd phase of sero survey in Mumbai

Mumbai: The Mumbai civic body has started the second phase of the sero-surveillance study in the city from Monday to assess the spread of Covid-19 and how many people have developed antibodies against the disease. The survey will cover F-North (Dadar, Matunga and Dharavi), M-West (Deonar and Govandi) and R-North (Dahisar) wards, where a similar study was conducted last month. The study will provide information about the spread of the infection and also throw light on herd immunity, an official said. "The sero-surveillance study will give an insight into the spread of Covid-19 and development of antibodies. The paper work for the survey has begun from today," the additional municipal commissioner said.

56 jail inmates test Covid-19 +ve in UP

Bareilly: At least 56 inmates of two prisons in Bareilly of Uttar Pradesh have tested positive for Covid-19, officials said. "Reports of 51 inmates of central jail and five inmates of district jail have been found positive for Covid-19," district surveillance officer Ashok Kumar said. Inmates of the prisons were tested after an inmate of the Central jail died due to Covid-19, he said. The district has so far reported 3,773 coronavirus cases with 98 deaths. Meanwhile, according to a report from Banda, a journalist died due to Covid-19 on Sunday. Anjani Nigam (52) was admitted at the Banda Medical College and later referred to the Sanjay Gandhi Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences in Lucknow on Saturday when his condition deteriorated. — PTI

Newborn girl found abandoned in dump

Mangaluru: A newborn baby girl was found abandoned in a garbage bin near the district mother and child hospital in Udipi, about 55 kms from here, on Monday morning, police sources said. The baby, spotted by civic workers, has been admitted to the hospital. The condition of the infant is stable, the sources said. A case has been registered and investigations to find out the person who abandoned the baby have begun. CCTV cameras in the area are being examined, the sources added. — PTI

In most cases, education being imparted free of cost

In pandemic, open-air classes gain momentum in Kashmir

YUSUF JAMEEL
SRINAGAR, AUG. 10

As Kashmir continues to reel under lockdown necessitated by the alarming increase in the number of Covid-19 deaths and positive cases, the holding of open-air classes for students forcibly kept away from schools for more than a year now is gaining momentum across the Valley.

Private teachers and tutors are organising such lessons in batches for students from primary to higher secondary classes, at least, at a couple of dozen places in various districts of the Valley. In most cases, the education in the time of pandemic is being imparted to these students free of cost. In remaining instances, mohalla (locality) or village welfare committees or charitable organisations are funding the pursuit.

The trendsetter of this unique exercise is Muneer Aalam, an engineer-turned-teacher from Srinagar. He had in view of the slow 2G Internet speed debilitating the online classes launched for students by their respective institutions in the Valley earlier, started free open-air coaching classes at Srinagar's Idgah grounds in June "to ensure the students don't fall behind their school or college syllabi. His "Minaz Zulumaat-i-Ilan Noor". From darkness (of ignorance) to the brightest light (of knowledge)-endeavour not only continues but it has also inspired many people here and elsewhere in the Valley and is being widely appreciated in Kashmir and beyond.

40-year-old Aalam relocates to the spacious Idgah grounds with the break of dawn to start his tuition classes for nearly eighty male and female students



Engineer-turned-teacher Muneer Aalam holds an open-air classe in Srinagar's Idgah grounds. Mr Aalam hold classes in batches for about 80 students. — H.U. NAQASH

in batches. These students pour in from different parts of Srinagar and neighbouring townships, carrying their foldable chairs or mats to attend the classes. "We strictly adhere to the COVID-19 SOPs and guidelines and take all necessary precautions which include students sitting at distances and wearing facemasks throughout."

Last week, when Srinagar received rains after a long time, these classes were held on the porch of Aali Masjid, which is part of the historical Idgah where Muslims offer special Id prayers twice in a year, instead. "For the first time in the last fifty day, we took the classes a few metres away from our open-air classroom on the veranda of Aali Masjid. The management of the mosque, the second largest in Kashmir, readily agreed to it," he said.

He added, "It was raining like cats and dogs but I decided to look for an alternative place to hold the classes so that the students who come from near and far off places are not disappointed."

'Online classes lead to stress & anxiety'

AGE CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
AUG. 10

The online classes being conducted in the wake of Covid-19 pandemic has led to various kinds of physical and psychological stress and anxiety among children especially those in the lower classes.

This was found out in a study conducted by Dr Jayaprakash R, child psychiatrist and behavioural paediatrics, chief of the government medical college Thiruvananthapuram. The response of a cross section of students from various classes and parents was elicited through in depth telephonic interviews. Many students disclosed that they could remain totally attentive only for the first 30 minutes of the class and sat idly for the rest of the period.

"As part of the study we sought the opinion of par-

ents of the students studying in government-aided CBSE/ICSE schools and Kendriya Vidyalayas of various districts in Kerala. The exercise was carried out in the wake of widespread complaints against online classes aired in the public domain including social media," said Dr Jayaprakash.

Many students complained that online classes caused mental strain, anxiety, irritability, sleeplessness, learning stress and loss of self esteem besides behavioral problems like hyperactivity and attention issues. Physical problems like eye strain, blurring of vision which may necessitate repeated ophthalmic consultation, neck pain, headache, back pain etc were also pointed out by students.

A section of students said they were not able to cope with online tuitions along with online classes.

Maha seeks PM-led panel on natural calamities

Modi reviews losses cause by heavy rains in states

AGE CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, AUG. 10

The Maharashtra government has demanded setting up of a national-level committee headed by the prime minister to tackle natural calamities and ensuring better coordination among states in the country.

The demand was made by chief minister Uddhav Thackeray during a video conference with PM Narendra Modi on Monday. Though the inter-state flood management system is useful, there should be Centre's representatives in it, he said to buttress his point.

Mr Modi interacted with the CMs of Maharashtra, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala, Karnataka and Assam to review the losses caused by heavy rains and floods in the video conference.

Mr Thackeray apprised Mr Modi about the June 3 Cyclone Nisarga in Konkan and the August 5 downpour in Mumbai and sought immediate assistance from the Centre.

"The state suffered a loss of ₹1,065 crore due to Nisarga cyclone in coastal districts, whereas the heavy rains caused damages worth ₹500 crore in Mumbai," he said.

Mumbai recorded 333 mm rainfall during 24-hour period on August 5 coupled with stormy winds with speed from 70

303 UP villages cut off, 1L families hit due to floods

Lucknow Aug. 10: The flood situation in Uttar Pradesh improved slightly on Monday, but 19 districts are still affected and their 303 villages cut off from the other parts of the state, officials said. Relief commissioner Sanjay Goyal said a total of 582 villages in the 19 districts are affected and 303 of these villages have got marooned.

On Sunday, a total of 20 districts in the state were

affected by the flood. Pratapgarh has been dropped from the Monday list of affected districts.

As many as 1,04,562 families and 38,248 hectare of agricultural land have been affected in the 19 flood-hit districts, UP CM Yogi Adityanath said.

The chief minister also said that excess water damaged three embankments in Azamgarh, Mau and Gonda, but they have now been mended. — PTI

to 106 kmph. Nobody thought it would cause such havoc, the Maharashtra CM added.

To alleviate the flooding problem in Mumbai, Mr Thackeray urged the PM to hand over a land parcel owned by the Union commerce ministry to the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation to set up a pumping station at Mahul.

SC to hear today merger of BSP MLAs with Cong

New Delhi, Aug. 10: The Supreme Court Monday said it would on Tuesday hear the petitions filed on the issue relating to merger of six BSP MLAs with the Congress in Rajasthan last year.

The apex court was hearing a plea filed by a BJP MLA who has challenged the Rajasthan High Court order which had refused to stay the functioning as Congress legislators of six BSP MLAs who after election to the assembly merged with the ruling party in the state.

A bench headed by Justice Arun Mishra said that appeal filed by BJP MLA Madan Dilawar would be heard along with a separate plea filed by the six MLAs.

In their plea, these six MLAs have requested the apex court to transfer to itself Dilawar's plea pending in the high court seeking their disqualification for allegedly violating the party whip.

Mr Dilawar has challenged in the apex court the August 6 order of a division bench of high court which had disposed of his plea against the order of a single judge, who had refused to stay the functioning of these six MLAs as Congress legislators.

Cong govt in Raj 'bound to disintegrate' soon: BJP

New Delhi, Aug. 10: Amid signs of a rapprochement between the Congress and its Rajasthan rebel faction led by Sachin Pilot, the BJP is weighing its options and working to put up a united face against the Ashok Gehlot government ahead of the Assembly session from August 14.

BJP legislative party leader Gulab Chand Kataria claimed even a unity in the Congress ranks can only be temporary and the government is "bound to disintegrate sooner than later".

A meeting of BJP MLAs has been called on

Tuesday, Mr Kataria told PTI.

BJP sources said former chief minister Vasundhara Raje, who has been meeting party's national leadership in Delhi over the last few days, may attend the meeting in Jaipur.

There may have been differences but everyone is now on the same page, the sources said, referring to reports that she was unhappy at not being kept in loop over the party's tactics in Rajasthan after rebellion of 18 Congress MLAs led by Pilot against the Gehlot government. — PTI



Karnataka CM B.S. Yediyurappa is discharged from a hospital after recovering from Covid-19 in Bengaluru on Monday. — PTI

Cong & allies begin efforts to strengthen base in Bihar

NAYEAR AZAD
PATNA, AUG. 10

With an eye on the Assembly elections, the Congress and other grand alliance partners have started taking measures to strengthen their party's base in Bihar.

According to reports, Rajya Sabha MP and Congress party's Bihar in-charge Shakti Singh Gohil met senior party leaders in Patna recently and asked them to identify constituencies where JD(U) had fielded candidates during the 2015 Assembly elections. Party leaders have also been asked to prepare a list of constituencies where the RJD is in number three position.

Sources said that during the meeting several senior leaders also urged the party leadership for "sizeable seat share" to contest in the upcoming Assembly polls.

In the 2015 Assembly polls, the RJD in alliance with JD(U) had contested 101 seats each while the Congress was given 41 out of 243 seats. In the present scenario when the JD(U) is out of the grand alliance, congress leaders are not in a mood to compromise on the issue of seat adjustments with the RJD.

Besides, two other grand alliance partners Rashtriya Lok Samta Party (RLSP) and Hindustani Awam Morcha (HAM) have also been hinting at contesting on more seats during the Assembly elections which is likely to be held by the end of this year.

POLICE HEADQUARTERS JAMMU AND KASHMIR SRINAGAR	
Phone/Fax No: 0194-2443031/2443032 (Sgr) 0192-2459029/2459255(jmu)	Website: www.jkpolice.gov.in E-mail: phqjk@nic.in
(provision Section)	
Extension Notice	
Due to administrative reasons, the last date for submission of on-line bids & opening of Technical bids against NIT No: 25 of 2020 dated 19.06.2020 floated by this Hqrs for procurement of Public Address System is re-scheduled as under:-	
1. Last date of receipt of tenders = 17.08.2020 up to 1800 hours	
2. Date of opening of technical bids = 19.08.2020 at 1100 hours.	
The other terms and conditions of the NIT shall remain the same.	
Sd/-	
Rayees Mohammad Bhat (IPS) A/G (Provision & Transport), For Director General of Police, J&K-Srinagar.	
No. : Prov-II/Elect-05/2020-21/32407-14	Dated 06.08.2020.
DIPK-3888/20 Dated 10.08.20	

Office of the Executive Engineer, Transmission Line Maintenance Division-VI, Bemina, Srinagar-J&K. Tele Fax: 0194-2492429 Email: tcltdistpdd@gmail.com psdfjkpddtcl1@gmail.com	
EXTENSION NOTICE NIT No. TLMD-VI/ 01 (RETENDER) of 2020-21 Dt.23-04-2020 (EXTENSION OF DATES)	
Due to poor response the date of bid submission for above NIT is extended as given in below table:	
Description of Work: SUPPLY, INSTALLATION TESTING AND COMMISSIONING INCLUDING DESIGN, ENGINEERING, MANUFACTURE, SHOP TESTING, PACKING, LOADING AND FORWARDING, TRANSPORTATION, DELIVERY, UNLOADING, ERECTION TESTING AND COMMISSIONING WITH OLTC, RTCC SCADA COMPATIBLE, NIPFES AND OTHER ACCESSORIES OF SINGLE PHASE (3 No.s) AUTO POWER TRANSFORMER (3X53.33 MVA BANK), OF 220/132/11KV ONAN / ONAF/OFAP RATING FOR GRID STATION Delina Baramulla	
A E-Bid Submission (end) date & Time	17.08.2020 up to 02.00 PM
B E-Bid Commercial and Technical e-Bid opening date & Time	20.08.2020 at 02.00 PM
C Online financial e-Bid opening date & time (Only of the technically qualified bidders)	Will be communicated to the Technically Qualified Bidders
All other terms and conditions shall remain same as per attached SBD, BOQ and other documents uploaded on site	
No: TLMD-VI/628-31 Dated: 06-08-2020	
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DIPK-1728/20 Dated 10.08.20	

No timeline yet on schools' reopening

New Delhi, Aug. 10: No timeline has been fixed yet by the ministry of education for reopening of schools as majority of states are not in favour of it in view of the spike in Covid-19 cases, according to sources.

While the government is looking at the possibility of starting some classes for senior students from September end or October, no final decision has been taken in this regard, they said.

"No timeline has been fixed yet as the decision will completely depend on the pandemic situation. Barring one union territory, no other state or UT is in favour of reopening schools in near future," a source said.

"Possibility of higher secondary classes in late September is being explored but there has been no final decision. Whenever it is decided, the Centre will only issue an advisory in this regard and states will have to take a call depending on the situation," the source added. — PTI

SHORT TAKES

Rajnath to release book on life of vice-prez Naidu

New Delhi: Union defence minister Rajnath Singh will release a book, *Connecting, Communicating, Changing*, chronicling vice-president and Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu's three years in office, on Tuesday. The book, giving details of Mr Naidu's visits in India and abroad, his interactions with scientists, doctors, industry leaders, chief ministers, artists among others, world leaders and Indian diaspora also has a chapter on 'Mission Connect' where the vice-president enquired about the well-being of his friends, teachers, long-time associates, acquaintances—old and new, relatives, MPs, spiritual leaders and journalists, among others during the Covid-19 pandemic. The electronic version of the book will be launched by information and broadcasting minister Prakash Javadekar.

Meanwhile, Mr Naidu on Monday attended the foundation laying ceremony of 40 dwelling units for the Rajya Sabha Secretariat, through video conferencing where he expressed concern over the inordinate delay in putting the prime land to use that was allotted for the Secretariat as early as in 2003.



N. Biren Singh

BJP-led govt wins trust vote in Manipur

Imphal: The BJP-led N. Biren Singh government in Manipur on Monday won the trust vote 28-16 in the state Assembly. The confidence motion, moved by Singh, was put to vote after a marathon debate during the one-day special session, and he emerged victorious. Eight Congress MLAs skipped the proceedings, defying a party whip. The Congress has 24 MLAs in the House of 60, whose effective strength is 53. Both the BJP and the Congress had issued whips to their 18 and 24 MLAs respectively asking them to be present in the Assembly and vote as per their party's line. The Congress had on July 28 moved a no-confidence motion against the BJP-led government in the state. — PTI

J&K: Faesal quits politics

■ **Continued from Page 1**

jails here, the 36-year-old bureaucrat-turned-politician was released on June 3 this year. He did not make any statement after his release and didn't even react to reports appearing in a section of the media that he was among the J&K's politicians and activists who were set free by the authorities after they signed a bond agreeing to cease their political activities.

Mr Faesal took the country by storm after quitting his job in January 2019.

On March 17, 2019, he floated a new political party in J&K, calling it a sincere and creative effort to change the political environs of the restive state. The dominant slogan of the party, named Jammu and Kashmir Peoples' Movement (JKPM), would be – "Ab Hawa Badlay Gi (now there will be wind of change)", he had said at a rally here on that day. He had also announced, "I've come here not to engage in traditional or regional politics but together with my team and the people who are joining us to seek an amicable solution of the Kashmir problem as per the wishes and aspirations of its people." He had, however, also asserted that the new party believes in shortening the distance between Delhi and Srinagar and will act as a catalyst towards resolving the Kashmir issue. Official sources here said that Mr Faesal's resignation as IAS officer has not still been accepted. Even after his submitting resignation 20 months ago, his name has not been removed from the list of J&K cadre IAS officers on the official website of the government.

SUSHANT DEATH CASE

Sad incident of Rajput's death unfortunately occurred just ahead of Bihar polls: Rhea

'Don't make me scapegoat of political agendas'

New Delhi, Aug. 10: A day before the crucial hearing, actress Rhea Chakraborty Monday told that Supreme Court that she should not be made "scapegoat of political agendas" in the actor Sushant Singh Rajput's death case and alleged that Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar is "reported to be responsible for registration of FIR in Patna" against her.

She claimed that the "sad incident" of Rajput's death unfortunately occurred just in wake of elections in Bihar and this led to the issue of suicide being isolated and "blown out of proportion in media", causing extreme trauma and infringement of privacy of her rights due to the "constant sensationalisation" of this case.

The actress said she has already been "convicted" by the media in the matter even before any foul play has been established.

In an additional affidavit filed in the apex court, Chakraborty said that she has "no objection" if the top court refers the case to CBI by its order and "even if the CBI investigates the matter the jurisdiction will still be with the courts at Mumbai and not at Patna".

The affidavit by the actress which stated that ruling party in Bihar and Centre is same and the said party is in minority in the state of Maharashtra, also alleged that the purported transfer of the case to a Patna court and further to the CBI on August 4 is only to render her petition in the apex court infructuous.

It alleged that the transfer of investigation to the CBI by Bihar Police is illegal and bad in law.

Chakraborty filed the affidavit in the top court which is seized of her plea seeking transfer of an FIR, lodged against her by Bihar Police in Patna on a complaint by Rajput's father Krishna Kishore



Actress Rhea Chakraborty and her brother Showik leave after a fresh round of questioning by ED in connection with a probe in a money laundering case linked to the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput in Mumbai on Monday. — PTI

Singh, to Mumbai. In her additional affidavit, she said that two actors — Ashutosh Bhakre and Sameer Sharma — were reported to have committed suicide in last one month and "yet no whisper about the same in power corridors."

"In case of death of Sushant Singh Rajput, Chief Minister of Bihar is reported to be responsible for registration of FIR in Patna," the affidavit claimed, adding, "The sad incident of the death of Sushant Singh Rajput who hailed from Bihar unfortunately occurred just in wake of elections in Bihar. This has led to the issue of suicide of deceased being isolated and blown out of proportion."

Two actors (Ashutosh Bhakre and Sameer Sharma) committed suicide in last one month and yet no whisper about the same in power corridors

— Rhea Chakraborty

"The issue is blown out of proportion in media. Media channels are examining and cross-examining all the witnesses in the case. Petitioner (Chakraborty) is already convicted by media even before a foul play in the death of Sushant Singh Rajput is established," it alleged, adding,

"Petitioner urges before this court that she should be protected and not be made scapegoat of political agendas".

Referring to a provision of the CrPC, which deals with offence triable where the act is done or consequence ensues, the affidavit said it appeared to have been "misconstrued to usurp jurisdiction in Bihar under political pressure".

From a plain reading of FIR, neither any such act which is done in the State of Bihar, nor any such consequence which has ensued in State of Bihar, is forthcoming by reason of which such act and consequence is an offence, out of any alleged in the FIR, it said. — PTI

Sushant cousin may sue Raut

Patna: Bihar BJP MLA Neeraj Kumar Singh alias Bablu, a close relative of Sushant Singh Rajput, on Monday lashed out at Sanjay Raut for making controversial remarks about the deceased actors family, especially his bereaved father, and threatened to sue the Shiv Sena MP for defamation.

Bablu, who had accompanied Rajputs family to Mumbai for performing the last rites after the 34-year-old was found dead at his Bandra residence on June 14, was left fuming by a piece written by Raut for *Saamna*, the Shiv Senas mouthpiece, and the Rajya Sabha members refusal to back down.

In the piece, Raut had alleged that the actor whose suicide is now being probed by the CBI had been anguished over the "second marriage" of his father and did not have cordial relations with his family. — PTI

Sanjay Nirupam slams Sena MP

Mumbai: Congress leader Sanjay Nirupam on Monday launched a veiled attack on Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut, accusing him of making "frivolous" statements about late actor Sushant Singh Rajput's family and said the saffron party should show sensibility.

Nirupam also said each family has its own story, including those in the Sena.

Nirupam tweeted, "Shiv Sena's MP is making frivolous comments about #Sushant_Singh_Rajput's family. Each family has its own story. Those in the Shiv Sena too have many of them. But Sushant's death is a sensitive issue." — PTI

Rhea, her father grilled by ED over money trail

AGE CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, AUG. 10

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) began their next round of questioning of actor Rhea Chakraborty, her brother Showik, father Indrajit and manager Shruti Modi on Monday in connection with the Sushant Singh Rajput suicide. The group was later joined by Siddharth Pithani, flat-mate of Rajput, after 2 pm who was summoned by the agency.

The ED is questioning them on the funds that were exchanged in the name of a company that was floated with an address in Ulwe in Raigad district. Chakraborty has meanwhile filed an affidavit before the Supreme Court stating she was subjected to a media trial and had already been tagged a murderer.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has stated that they would record statement of Rajput's father KK Singh either by sending a team to his Patna residence or by summoning him. The Bihar police's case is based on a statement that he gave to them alleging that Chakraborty was the reason his son committed suicide. The CBI will ascertain the allegations that he levelled against Chakraborty.

The ED has sped up the probe in the case with the second round of grilling of the Chakraborty family along with Modi and Pithani. They have found

THE ED is questioning them on the funds that were exchanged in the name of a company that was floated with an address in Ulwe in Raigad district

some transactions between Showik and his sister and to his account from Rajput, the trail of these monetary transactions is being looked into. The brother-sister duo was director in the said firm. "The questioning began around 11 am and they may be recalled for questioning again if needed," said ED officials. The ED has also found that despite having declared her income between ₹14 lakh and ₹18 lakh for the last two years, her investments have been to the tune of several lakhs, the source of which will be probed.

Earlier, Chakraborty told the ED that the 500 sqft residential property in Khar (east) was bought using her money and that she had not taken any monetary help from Rajput. Rajput was found hanging from the ceiling in the bedroom of his Bandra apartment. The agency will also record the statement of Rajput's CA in the case filed against Chakraborty, her parents (mother Sandhya Chakraborty and father), brother Showik, staff Samuel Miranda, Shruti Modi and other unknown persons for cheating and abetting suicide.

4 Maoist hideouts busted in Odisha

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO
BHUBANESWAR, AUG. 10

Security personnel have busted four Maoist hideouts and seized huge cache of live ammunition and other articles were seized following an exchange of fire between the ultras and security forces in Gandhamardhan Reserve forest under Paikmal police station limits in Odisha's Bargarh district, police said on Monday.

"About 10 to 15 CPI (Maoists) managed to escape after the shootout that took place at around 7.30 AM on Saturday and lasted for about half-an-hour," a press note issued by the state police headquarters, Cuttack, said.

Upon reliable Intelligence input regarding camping of CPI (Maoists) and planning for violent anti-state activities in Gandhamardhan range forest area, Special Operation Group (SOG) teams of Bargarh-Bolangir along with CRPF platoons started joint Anti-Naxal operation in the area. At around 7.30 AM, the SOG team and the left wing extremists noticed each other's movement in the area. The Maoists started indiscriminate firing upon the police team, the statement said.

It added, "Though the SOG team appealed to the ultras to stop firing and surrender, they shouted 'Lal Salam Jindabad.' Finding no alternative, SOG team resorted to controlled firing in self-defence. The exchange of fire continued for 30 minutes. The Maoist group could manage to escape taking advantage of dense forest and heavy rainfall."

During the search operation, the SOG team found four Maoist camps in a row and recovered live ammunition.



A tailor stitches flags for the upcoming Independence Day at a shop in Kolkata on Monday. — PTI

MP govt mulls special safari of maneater tigers

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY
BHOPLA, AUG. 10

In a first of its kind move, Madhya Pradesh forest department is planning to develop "special tiger reserves" to house the big cats captured in the forest and held in captivity in the zoos for various reasons, to ease pressure of tourism on the tiger reserves in the state.

The tigers identified to be released in the pro-

posed "special tiger reserves" included the big cats which have a history of killing human beings, called in common parlance as 'man-eaters', a senior forest officer said on Monday.

Several of such tigers have been captured and shifted to different zoos in the state for their rehabilitation.

At least three tigers, one female and two male ones, have been captured in different tiger reserves in the



state in the last four years.

"The basic idea of developing 'special tiger reserve' is to ease pressure of tourism in the core areas of the tiger reserves

62,064 new Covid cases in last 24 hrs

India reports 1,007 deaths in one day, but recovery rate goes up

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG. 10

India's novel coronavirus tally crossed the 22 lakh mark on Monday with 62,064 new cases, while the recoveries surged to over 15.35 lakh, the health ministry said.

The death toll from the pathogen climbed to 44,386 with 1,007 more fatalities, according to the ministry.

There are 6,34,945 active cases of the coronavirus disease (Covid-19). The total coronavirus cases now stands at 22,15,074, it said.

However, according to a

PTI tally, compiling the data provided by various state governments, the total cases stood at 22,61,541 and the death toll at 45,202.

India's Covid-19 cases have jumped from 10 lakh to 22 lakh in 24 days, an analysis of the health ministry data showed on Monday. India's Covid-19 recoveries have reached a "historic peak" with the recovery of 15,35,743 patients that was possible because of the policy of "testing aggressively, tracking comprehensively and treating efficiently", the health ministry said in a statement.

"Better ambulance services, focus on standard of care and use of non-invasive oxygen have given the desired results," the ministry said.

With the highest-ever single-day recoveries of 54,859 in the last 24 hours, the recovery rate has scaled another high of almost 70 per cent, it said.

The record high recoveries have ensured that the active cases have reduced to 28.66 per cent of the total cases.

The coordinated efforts of the Centre and state/UT governments on early detection through aggressive testing and effi-

cient clinical management of hospitalised cases have shown results with continuously regressing case fatality rate, which now stands at 2 per cent and is steadily declining, the ministry said.

Early identification of cases has also led to a steep fall in the percentage of active cases, it said. "Early identification helps to ensure timely and prompt isolation of the mild and moderate cases and hospitalisation of the severe and critical cases thereby leading to effective management of cases," the health ministry said.

Locals protest as NHAI toll gates stall traffic in Assam

MANOJ ANAND
GUWAHATI, AUG. 10

Two toll gates set up recently at Madanpur and Sonapur near the capital city Guwahati by the national highways authority of India has created anger among the residents and commuters of the areas with frequent protests by All Assam Students Union (AASU) and other organisation demanding the closure of toll-plazas immediately.

Referring the frequent chaotic traffic jam from Baihat Chariali to Madanpur toll gate, the commuters alleged that toll plazas at Madanpur

was set up without any proper planning for which the travellers have to face problem while passing through the area.

Pointing out as to how chaos erupted in the area as commuters faced massive traffic jam while passing through the toll gate and the passengers stuck in traffic jam for hours and hours on Monday, the angry protesters said that Baihata Charialai has become a satellite township of the capital city of Guwahati and setting up toll plaza in between was not feasible and bound to create problem for locals.

Accusing that even

ambulances are getting stuck for more than an hour in the toll plaza, the commuters who travel to and fro from Guwahati and Baihata Chariali expressed anger over the newly constructed toll plaza. "I travel to and fro from Guwahati and Baihata on a daily basis as I am a Railway employee and have to face the same problem every day. We have to wait for hours while passing through the toll gate," said the commuters, questioning that they are compelled to pay the taxes multiple times for the highways constructed with the money of taxpayers only.

Dhankar slams Didi for blocking PM scheme

RAJIB CHOWDHURI
KOLKATA, AUG. 10

A day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement of direct transfer of ₹17,000 crores through PM Kishan Samman Nidhi to nearly 8.50 crore farmers' bank accounts, West Bengal governor Jagdeep Dhankhar has blamed the Mamata Banerjee government of not allowing the central welfare scheme in the state.

In a letter to the chief minister on Monday, the West Bengal governor wrote, "It is indeed distressing to note that in our State, 70 lakh farmers continue to be denied the benefit of PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi. Farmers in the State have already lost ₹8,400 crores benefit which was their due and right. While each farmer all over the country has so far received ₹12,000, our farmers have been denied of this legitimate right on account of insensitivity and confrontational stance of the State Govt. I have flagged the issue to you and the administration many times."

THE ASIAN AGE

11 AUGUST 2020

Covid-19 facility fires offer safety lesson

Back-to-back early morning blazes in private Covid facilities, claiming eight and 11 lives respectively, should be seen as a much-required wake-up call for state governments. Fire services are under the 12th Schedule of the Constitution and fall in the domain of urban local bodies. These have an abysmal performance record when it comes to enforcing fire safety guidelines.

After the tragedy, however, a fire safety check has been ordered on all hospitals in Andhra Pradesh. Several states and municipal corporations all over India have followed suit. It is likely to open a can of worms.

Already, the fire service department has reported that over 250 hospitals under the jurisdiction of the Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation have not obtained no-objection certificates. In Hyderabad, in neighbouring Telangana, 90 per cent of its 1,700 hospitals are not following fire safety guidelines.

Fire safety only remains on paper. Unplanned construction in densely-populated areas remains the biggest threat. Only 30 per cent of cities have a fire master plan, which in most cases is outdated.

The National Building Code of India, 2016, stipulates regulations required for fire prevention and life safety for buildings. These regulations relate to design and construction; building materials; occupancy features necessary to minimise danger to life; smoke; equipment and installations and guidelines for fire drills and evacuations. Also, according to the Model Building Bylaws, 2003, building plans have to be referred to the chief fire officer.

However, like road safety, fire safety continues to stay on paper. Unplanned construction in densely-populated areas remains the biggest threat. Only 30 per cent of cities have a fire master plan, which in most cases is outdated.

Those who lost their lives in the fire at Vijayawada's five-storey Swarna Palace hotel, taken on lease by Ramesh Hospital, are more than mere statistics. Among them was Sabbithi Abraham, a pastor who had recently recovered from the disease but who stayed back to be with his wife, Raja Kumari. Raja Kumari, too, died in the disaster. Another patient, C. Pawan Sai Kisan, was the one to call up the police upon discovering the fire. The hotel's fire alarm had not been working.

In both cases, a short circuit was the event that led to the blaze. In the Swarna Palace blaze, the hotel as well as the hospital knew of the presence of defects in the air-conditioning system and wiring but had not bothered to carry out repairs. The hotel did not have a fire safety certificate. As was the case with Ahmedabad's Shrey Hospital, which is owned by Bharat Mahant, who defected to the BJP last year.

A common refrain is that private hospitals are capitalising on people's reluctance to avail care at government hospitals during this crisis and are charging exorbitant fees. Ramesh Hospital, for instance, was charging its Swarna Palace patients a daily package of ₹5,000 in addition to treatment and other charges. However, governments are reluctant to rein them in as yet.

Language of alienation

Reading the tweet of DMK MP Kanimozhi Karunanidhi that she was asked if she was an Indian just for not knowing Hindi gave a sense of déjà vu to many people in Tamil Nadu who had travelled up North. Students from the state being subjected to such savage humiliation for not speaking in Hindi in colleges and universities in places like Delhi is old hat. But the insult to Kanimozhi was striking as it happened at the Chennai airport.

Whatever be the real reason for the officer of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) refusing to communicate in a language that all air passengers could understand – it could be her lack of fluency in English or her fondness for Hindi – her questioning a passenger's nationality was uncalled for. Even if she was oblivious to India being a multi-linguistic nation, she had no right, as a CISF officer or otherwise, to take upon herself the authority to pronounce who can be an Indian.

While these personal drawbacks can hamper the officer from discharging her duties impartially, the present political situation allows her and many others like her to go about displaying Hindi chauvinism at airports and other public spaces without worrying about their prejudice and bigotry alienating non-Hindi speakers from the Indian mainstream.

It is of course intriguing that the particular officer, who should be living in Chennai, did not acknowledge that Tamil is never thrust upon the people who come to the state from outside. None of the lakhs of guest workers who walked their way back home from Tamil Nadu due to the sudden lockdown recently had to learn Tamil. For, the people of Tamil Nadu are not language chauvinists. They only resent forceful imposition of another language, be it through maltreatments at airports and universities or the implementation of a new National Education Policy.

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Subhani



Will Kashmir turn into 'heaven on earth' again?



Vishnu Prakash

Upon setting foot in Kashmir, Mughal Emperor Jehangir spontaneously recited an evocative couplet “*Gar firdaus bar-rue zamin ast, hami asto, hamin asto, hamin ast* (If there is a paradise on earth, it's here, it's here, it's here)” - which continues to resonate with millions of visitors every year.

The spell of mother nature's craftsmanship – inlaid with snow-capped mountains, golden sun rays, fabled valleys, lush meadows, glistening water bodies, manicured gardens, captivating flora and fauna – endures a lifetime. The region, traditionally home to Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists, had been an abode of multiculturalism, tranquility and harmony, thanks to its culture of “Kashmiriyat”.

Alas, that idyllic way of life was rudely disturbed by external inimical elements in October 1947 itself, within weeks of India's Independence. The UN commission hammered out a cease-fire agreement in August 1948, but without restoring the status quo ante.

At the behest of Sheikh Abdullah, Article 370 was introduced in the Constitution, temporarily according a special status to Jammu and Kashmir. In retrospect, this act of appeasement, that too on religious and political considerations, widened the emotional chasm between Kashmiris and other citizens, besides preventing a seamless integration of J&K with India.

To compound the folly, Article 35A was inserted by a presidential order in May 1954, barring Indians living outside J&K, from buying immovable property, applying for state government jobs or seeking permanent residency in the state. Such privileges were reserved only for J&K's so-called perma-

nent residents, otherwise called “state subjects”.

In the process a short shrift was given to the foundational and fundamental right to equality enshrined in the Indian Constitution. The state was also exempted from all the laws of the land, unless specifically adopted by its own Legislative Assembly.

Before long it became evident that these special provisions were damaging the national fabric. Kashmiri Muslims, in particular, began shunning their Indian identity. Vested interest groups gradually sprung up across the spectrum, to accentuate the divide for political and monetary gains. They unabashedly played the religious card to further their purpose, thereby also tempting external forces to fish in troubled waters.

Articles 370 and 35A started acquiring a façade of permanence. Though elections were held regularly and the electorate spoke its mind; peace, progress and stability eluded the state due to the machinations of disruptive forces, corruption and nepotism. While the miniscule elite lined its pockets, the ordinary people of J&K, especially women and the under-privileged, faced discrimination and suffering. They lost out on socio-economic empowerment initiatives becoming available to the rest of their countrymen.

Ending almost seven decades of injustice due to political dithering, on August 5, 2019, the Modi government made bold to accord similar rights, benefits and duties on the residents of J&K, as available to all other citizens in India. The offending “temporary” provisions under Articles 370 and 35A were removed. The separatists and the state's political elite were stunned. To deter them from creating any kind of

mischievous, some short-term restrictions were imposed, most of which have since been lifted.

Barring the usual suspects, the global community recognised that the full integration of J&K with the Indian Union, in consonance with its Constitution, was an internal matter of India. Ahmad Al Banna, the UAE's ambassador to India, voiced the expectation that “the changes will improve social justice and security and confidence of the people in local governance and will encourage further stability and peace”.

The historical move ushered in a “new dawn in the region”. It was decided to create two Union territories – namely J&K and Ladakh. J&K would have its full statehood restored at the earliest. A blueprint to provide gainful employment, promote tourism and establish quality infrastructure, centres of educational excellence like IITs and IIITs, as well as top grade medical and sports facilities was unveiled. Ladakh is to become a solar powerhouse and play a crucial role in the International Solar Alliance.

“Promises are never kept” ... did you say? Why not examine the actual implementation during the preceding 12 months. For the first time, the J&K government has launched an accelerated recruitment drive. Some 10,000 vacancies are being filled and 25,000 more are in the pipeline. Thousands of additional employment opportunities are being generated through power and infrastructure projects, especially under the Prime Minister's Development Programme. Of the 6,000 jobs earmarked for Kashmiri migrants, nearly 4,000 have already been filled.

Under the PMDP, 54 and nine projects have been allocated to J&K and Ladakh respectively. The pace of work has picked up dramatically. Seventeen projects have already been fully or substantially completed. The rest – including the construction of highways, bridges and flyovers,

transmission lines, hospitals and educational institutions, and hydro power generation projects – are being fast-tracked. Kashmir is to be connected with the rest of India, by rail, by December 2022.

Every effort is being made to strengthen grassroots democracy to empower panchayats, in particular. Implementation of the Centre's welfare schemes like MGN-REGA, Swachhh Bharat Mission and the mid-day meals have been entrusted to them. A commendable “Back to Village” programme has been initiated, under which a gazetted officer actually stays for two days in every village, to take stock of implementation, review constraints and receive feedback.

Particular attention is being given to empower the underprivileged. Welfare schemes like Ujjwala, Ujala (100 per cent electrification achieved), income support to poor farmers, placement linked vocational training, scholarships, etc are being provided.

Since becoming an UT, Ladakh's socio-economic, educational and development needs are getting utmost priority. Steps have been initiated to prepare a vision document titled “Ladakh 2050”.

In sum, the government's farsighted decision in August 2019, has heralded a new era of hope, equity and empowerment. Kashmiris are witnessing purposeful efforts by the state and Union governments to instil greater dignity, development and democracy in the region. Consequently, the green shoots of peace and aspiration are beginning to sprout. With the government and people determined to stay the course, Kashmir is certain of reclaiming its crown as “heaven on earth” once again.

The writer is a foreign affairs analyst and a former Indian ambassador to South Korea and high commissioner to Canada.

LETTERS PRICE RISE

This refers to the report that prices of vegetables are unlikely to come down for the next two-three weeks.

Anyway, have prices ever come down after a hike?

Take the example of fuel and gas prices. Despite the steep fall in prices of fuel in the international markets, our government continued to increase the petrol and gas prices, day after day. At the same time, the RBI continued to reduce the interest rates, which now stand below 6 per cent from nearly 10 per cent in 2015. This has definitely pinched the pockets of common man, especially senior citizens who solely depend on their term deposit interest to survive. At this rate, we are afraid if we will be able to see the “Ache Din” promised by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Capt. N. Viswanathan
Coimbatore

FEAR PSYCHOSIS

MAHARASHTRA In general and Mumbai in particular is suffering the most from the coronavirus pandemic. The state has recorded the highest number of recoveries but also 12,000 plus new cases and 390 deaths in a single day. Covid-19 has successfully embedded more fear and less caution in the society's mind. There is a particular set of people, who have absolutely no fear. There is another group, living in mortal fear 24/7, despite even taking the utmost precautions. This is driving a whole society into a state of fear psychosis.

C.K. Akhilesh Krishnan
Navi Mumbai

DEFENCE GOODS

THE DEFENCE ministry taking the lead to manufacture 101 items in India, as part of the Atmanirbhar Bharat plan, is good news. Critics should not take potshots at the government's efforts as local manufacturing will bring better prospects on the war front than dependence on imports. Hence, the chances of people enjoying kick backs in arms deals are also very low.

C.K. Subramaniam
Navi Mumbai

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



Aakar Patel

India losing its 'mahabharat' against Covid?

The “Mahabharat” against Covid-19 has been lost. India had registered more cases last week, about three lakhs, than any other nation including the United States. We are clocking over 60,000 cases a day and there is nothing to stop the number from going to one lakh a day and higher.

The only places in India that have registered a drop are the cities where the levels of infection are so widespread that half the city has already been touched, and the scope for increase is limited. Nothing is stopping the spread of Covid-19.

It may interest readers to know that India is the only nation to show a consistently exponential trend of growth. Our graph from the beginning of March till today is one that goes straight up and steeply. This is not how other nations have responded. Europe saw peaks in March and then Italy, Spain, Britain and others have declined since then. America saw a peak in April, led mostly by the spread in New York, then a fall and now is seeing another rise in other parts of the country.

Bangladesh saw a peak in June and has since been in decline.

Pakistan was clocking half the number of cases as India but peaked in June and has been dropping since, averaging less than 1,000 cases a day now. Sri Lanka has been in total control of the epidemic and has only 300 active cases now, and a total of only 11 deaths since its first cases in March.

India is the only nation, to repeat, that has consistently been going up in terms of number of cases from the start till now. This was not the result expected when the Centre took charge of the problem on March 24, when we had 500 cases. We have 30 times more cases each day today after various lockdowns, from total bans on all activity to a series of unlocks that nobody really understands any longer and almost nobody follows. Even the police, initially enthusiastic about stopping movement, has lost interest across the country in trying to combat the plague. The question is not whether we have lost the Covid “Mahabharat” because the numbers are clear. The question is why. The answer is that we never had a strategy to counter the pandemic. The first lockdown was the biggest mistake

The lockdown in India, along with that in Mauritius, New Zealand and South Africa, was rated 100, meaning individuals had no freedom. New Zealand peaked in March, Mauritius in April and South Africa in July.

we made. What Prime Minister Narendra Modi should have told the country was that this was a highly infectious disease but with a very low fatality rate. People should be extremely cautious about not touching their face, washing their hands regularly and wearing a mask to protect others. They could go about their work and business otherwise.

What he did instead was to create panic across the entire country. By calling it a “Mahabharat” and saying specifically we would win it in 21 days, he took the seriousness out of the fight against Covid-19. It would end after the lockdown is what he told us, and this was wrong. This was not a short and sharp battle that would be won or lost over three weeks, but a long one of vigilance

rather than extreme measures.

The three-week strict lockdown was described by an Oxford University study as the harshest in the world. The lockdown in India, along with that in Mauritius, New Zealand and South Africa, was rated 100, meaning individuals had no freedom. New Zealand peaked in March, Mauritius in April and South Africa in July. In India, it made no meaningful difference to the rate of spread. Not only that, it has comprehensively gutted the economy in a way that all of us can palpably feel at the level of each individual. All of us are suffering in a way that we have not before in our lives. Those who are not yet, will soon do so. This is a recession, a word whose meaning none of us is familiar with.

The mismanagement of the lockdown has made India pay a real price, that it is still continuing to pay four months later. A report in the Hindu Frontline headlined “Surat: Silence of the looms” said 35 lakh migrants in the Surat area had gone back home after suffering great deprivation. There was nobody to operate the machines and even mar-

kets that were open would be shut down when one positive case was discovered. There was no plan to move forward and things were happening by default. If the workers return, and if the demand for fabrics returns, then the great manufacturing city of Surat would try to stand again on its feet. Till then, things will continue the way they were. This level of incompetence is not to be found in any other nation that has been hit by Covid-19.

The truth is that Narendra Modi is attracted to the grand announcement. He likes the spotlight and the energy of the moment. Covid-19 was a struggle not of brief violence, an 18-day war like the Mahabharat, but a long one of carefulness and patience. Other nations knew it and their leaders communicated it in that fashion. Mr Modi's style has left us with 20 lakh cases and over 40,000 deaths, and who knows how many more to come. The peak is nowhere in sight. And it has absolutely ruined an economy that was already tottering last year.

The writer is a senior journalist and columnist

IN BRIEF

11 drown in Panama flood

Panama City: Eleven people from one family died Sunday in Panama when their home was swept away in a flash flood as they slept, officials said. Nine of them were minors, said Carlos Rumbo, head of the national civil protection service. Two other people are missing in the sudden rise of the Bejuco River in Veraguas province west of Panama City. President Laurentino Cortizo expressed his condolences on Twitter. The civil protection service had warned Sunday of heavy storms with lightning and gusting winds in much of the Central American country.

Niger: French aid workers killed

Koure, Niger: Gunmen on motorcycles killed eight people, including a group of French aid workers, as they visited a part of Niger popular with tourists for its wildlife, officials said. "There are eight dead: two Nigeriens including a guide and a driver, while the other six are French," the governor of the Tillabéri region said on Sunday. France confirmed its nationals were among the dead, without giving a figure. French aid group ACTED said several of its workers were among those killed during a tourist outing. "Among the eight people killed in Niger, several were Acted employees," said the NGO's lawyer Joseph Braham. It is believed to be the first such attack on Westerners in the area, a popular tourist attraction in the former French colony thanks to its unique population of West African or Niger giraffes.

Bomb kills six in Balochistan

Quetta: An improvised bomb planted on a motorbike killed six people in Pakistan's Balochistan province on Monday, police said. A vehicle carrying personnel from the country's anti-narcotic force was believed to be the target of the blast in Chaman town, which borders Afghanistan, senior police official Razzaq Cheema said. "The explosion killed six passersby and wounded 10 others, two of them critically," he said. Local police official Masood Khan confirmed the attack and casualties. No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack but Baluch separatists demanding greater autonomy have been waging an insurgency for years while the province is also riven by sectarian strife and Islamist violence. Interior minister Ejaz Shah said in a statement that "such attacks are aimed at spreading fear among the people". Mineral-rich Balochistan, bordering Afghanistan and Iran, is the largest of Pakistan's four provinces, but its roughly seven million inhabitants have long complained they do not receive a fair share of its gas and mineral wealth. China is investing in the area under a \$54 billion project known as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

BASHIR'S TRIAL DELAYED

Khartoum, Aug. 10: The trial of Sudan's ousted ex-president Omar al-Bashir was delayed Monday at the request of his defence, a prosecution lawyer said. The trial of Bashir over the military coup that brought him to power more than three decades ago, as well as of 27 other defendants, opened with a brief hearing in July.

The second hearing had been set for August 11. But defence lawyers requested a delay for three of the defendants — Bashir as well as two former senior leaders of the once powerful but now defunct National Congress Party. "Lawyers for three defendants petitioned the Court of Appeal to release three defendants on bail, after the court refused to grant their request at the trial's first hearing on July 21," Moaz Hadra, one of the prosecution lawyers, said. "The Court of Appeal must rule, and then a new date for the trial will be set," Bashir, 76, and his co-accused could face the death penalty if convicted over the 1989 Islamist-backed overthrow of the democratically elected government of prime minister Sadek al-Mahdi.

It is the first time in the Arab world's modern history that the architect of a coup is tried for plotting a putsch, although the man dubbed the true brain behind it, Hassan Turabi of the National Islamic Front, died in 2016. Bashir stayed in power for 30 years before being overthrown on April 11, 2019.

US polls: Why running mate pick matters more this year

Joe Biden has committed to selecting a woman and is considering Blacks

New York, Aug. 10: For all the secrecy and speculation that typically surrounds the search for a vice presidential candidate, the decision rarely sways an election. But ahead of Joe Biden's imminent announcement, this year could be different. At a minimum, the decision will shift the force of the campaign — at least temporarily — away from Donald Trump's turbulent presidency onto Biden himself.

That's not a place many Democrats are comfortable given Biden's proclivi-

ty for gaffes and the persistent lack of excitement behind his candidacy.

More fundamentally, the choice offers Biden an unusual opportunity to unify a party still reeling from Trump's 2016 win and solidify its future. He's already committed to selecting a woman and is considering several Black women. And since the 77-year-old Biden has not committed to seeking a second term, his running mate could be strongly positioned to become the Democratic Party's presid-

ential nominee in 2024 and shape national politics for the next decade.

Sen. Tim Kaine of Virginia, who served as Hillary Clinton's vice presidential nominee in 2016, said Biden's decision "may be the most closely held and personally driven vice presidential pick ever".

"Nobody knows this job better than Joe Biden and nobody did the job better than Biden, so he's gonna really control this one on his own," Kaine said in an interview. He pushed back against those who dis-

count the impact of running mates, estimating he added about 2 percentage points to Clinton's winning margin of 5 percentage points in Virginia.

While Biden has said a top priority is selecting someone who could step into the presidency on Day One, the politics of the moment have pushed the silver-haired white man to the brink of making history. He could become the first presidential nominee of a major party to select a woman of colour.

Last weekend, he met

privately with Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, who's white.

Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren, who also is white, has been a leading contender. Biden's campaign team has been in recent contact with a small group of finalists that includes at least four women of colour: California Sen. Kamala Harris, former national security adviser Susan Rice, California Rep. Karen Bass and Illinois Sen. Tammy Duckworth.

— AP



Volunteers, clad in masks due to the Covid-19 pandemic, distribute meals to people who have been affected by the Beirut port explosion in the Ashrafieh neighbourhood of Lebanon's capital Beirut on Monday.

— AFP

World pledges 250 mn euros for Lebanon Govt to resign over blast fallout

Paris, Aug. 10: World leaders on Sunday pledged more than 250 million euros for disaster-struck Lebanon, conference host France said, with the emergency aid to be delivered "directly" to a population reeling from the deadly port blast in Beirut. Fifteen government leaders, including US President Donald Trump, took part in the virtual conference hosted by French President Emmanuel Macron and the UN, pledging solidarity with the Lebanese people and promising to muster "major resources" in the coming days and weeks.

A joint statement issued after the meeting in which representatives of nearly 30 countries as well as the EU and Arab League participated, did not mention a global amount. But Macron's office said the total figure of "emergency aid pledged or that can be mobilised quickly" amounts to 252.7 million euros (\$298 million), including 30 million euros from France. Macron was the first world leader to visit the former French colony after Tuesday's devastating explosion of a huge stockpile of ammonium nitrate which killed more than 150 people, wounded some 6,000 and left an estimated 300,000 homeless.

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said that "more than 200 million euros of emergency aid have been collected," including 20 million euros from Germany. The joint statement from the world leaders and their representatives underscored concerns about Lebanese government corruption. "The participants agreed that their assistance should be timely, sufficient and consistent with the needs of the Lebanese people, well-coordinated under the leadership of the United Nations, directly delivered to the Lebanese population, with utmost efficiency and transparency," it said.

USAID acting administrator John Barsa also said in a conference call Sunday that American help, some \$15 million announced so far, "is absolutely not going to the government".

The donor nations urged Lebanon's authorities to "fully commit themselves to timely measures and reforms" in order to unlock longer-term support for the country's economic and financial recovery. And they said assistance for "an impartial, credible and independent inquiry" into Tuesday's explosion "is immediately needed and available, upon request of Lebanon".

Youth Minister Vartine Ohanian said, saying she backed such calls.

Diab, who was set to address the nation on television at 1630 GMT, "is heading towards resignation", said another minister who asked not to be named after four of his colleagues had already stepped down.

According to the health ministry, at least 160 people were killed in Lebanon's worst peacetime disaster, 6,000 were wounded and about 20 remained missing. Six days after the enormous chemical blast which wreaked destruction across swathes of the

capital and was felt as far away as the island of Cyprus, residents and volunteers were still clearing the debris off the streets.

International rescue teams with sniffer dogs and specialised equipment remained at work at the disaster's charred "ground zero", where the search was now for bodies and not survivors.

The Lebanese want heads to roll over the tragedy and are asking how a massive stockpile of volatile ammonium nitrate, a compound used primarily as a fertiliser, was left unsecured at the port for years.

The country's top offi-

cials have promised a swift and thorough investigation — but they have stopped short of agreeing to an independent probe led by foreign experts as demanded by the protesters.

Four ministers had already decided they could no longer stand with a government that has shown little willingness to take the blame or to put state resources at the service of the victims.

The contagion looked set to spread, leaving Diab, who only accepted the top job in December last year, no option but to follow suit and agree to a full cabinet resignation.

— AFP

The UN said some \$117 million will be needed for an emergency response over the next three months, for health services, emergency shelter, food distribution and programmes to prevent further spread of Covid-19, among other interventions. Lebanese President Michel Aoun, who was also on Sunday's group call, thanked Macron for the initiative.

"Much is needed to rebuild what has been destroyed and to restore Beirut's lustre," the Lebanese presidency quoted him on Twitter as saying. "The needs are many and we

need to address them quickly, especially before the arrival of winter, which will accentuate the suffering of homeless citizens."

At least 21 people are still missing from the blast, and the Lebanese army said Sunday hopes of finding survivors are dwindling. Lebanese people enraged by official negligence blamed for the explosion have taken to the streets in anti-government protests that have resulted in clashes with the army. Macron said it was now up to the authorities of Lebanon "to act so that the country does not sink".

— AFP

US cabinet member meets Taiwan leader

Taipei, Aug. 10: A US cabinet member met Taiwan's leader Monday during the highest level visit from the United States since it switched diplomatic recognition from the island to China in 1979, a trip that Beijing has condemned.

Health Secretary Alex Azar is in Taipei for a three-day visit to promote shared democratic values and the island's success in taming the Coronavirus. His trip comes as relations between the United States and China are in tumult, with the two sides clashing over a wide range of trade, military and security issues, as well as the pandemic.

China, which insists Taiwan is its own territory and vows to one day reclaim it, has described Azar's visit as a threat to "peace and stability". On Monday morning, Azar met President Tsai Ing-wen, who advocates the island being recognised as a sovereign nation and is loathed by China's leaders. "Taiwan's response to Covid-19 has been am-

ong the most successful in the world, and that is a tribute to the open, transparent, democratic nature of Taiwan's society and culture," Azar told Tsai. Tsai thanked the US for supporting its bid to be part of the World Health Organisation (WHO), a body Beijing keeps the island frozen out of.

"Political considerations should never take precedence over the rights to health," Tsai said, calling Beijing's refusal to let Taiwan join "highly regrettable". Azar brushed off China's criticism when asked about Beijing's anger over his visit.

"The message that I bring from the US government is one of reaffirming the deep partnership the United States has with Taiwan in terms of security, commerce, health care and shared common values of democracy, economic freedom and liberty," he told reporters before his meeting with Tsai.

Azar has previously been critical of Beijing's response to the Coronavirus.

— AFP

HK media mogul Jimmy Lai nabbed

Hong Kong, Aug. 10: Hong Kong pro-democracy media tycoon Jimmy Lai was arrested Monday and led in handcuffs through his newspaper office as police raided the building, part of a sweeping crackdown on dissent since China imposed a security law on the city.

Lai, 71, was among nine people detained on charges, including colluding with foreign forces — one of the new national security offences — and fraud, in an operation targeting his Next Digital publishing group. It was the latest police operation against dissidents under the sweeping new law introduced at the end of June.

Two of Lai's sons were among those detained, a police source said as well as Wilson Li, a former pro-democracy activist who describes himself as a freelance videographer working for Britain's *ITV News*. The most serious national security crimes carry up to life in jail.

Journalists working at Lai's Apple Daily broadcasted dramatic footage on Facebook of some 200 police officers conducting the raid, and the newspaper's chief editor Law Wai-kong demanding a warrant from officers. Apple's staff were ordered to leave their seats and line up so police could check their identities as officers conducted searches across the newsroom.

At one point Lai was present, in handcuffs and surrounded by officers.

Beijing, Aug. 10: China on Monday sanctioned 11 Americans, including senators Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz, in retaliation for similar US moves prompted by Beijing's crackdown in Hong Kong.

Washington last week accused 11 officials of suppressing "freedom and democratic processes" in Hong Kong, including city leader Carrie Lam, and announced plans to freeze their US assets.

It was the toughest US action yet in response to Beijing's introduction of a sweeping and controversial new national security law for the former British territory.

Beijing said the measure was a violation of international law and "grossly interferes in China's internal affairs".

— AFP

Police said the search was conducted with a court warrant which was shown to staff.

Chris Yeung, president of the Hong Kong Journalists Association, described the police action as "shocking and terrifying". "This is unprecedented, and would be unimaginable only one or two months ago," he said.

— AFP

HK police could face torture case

London, Aug. 10: Senior British officers in the Hong Kong police force could face legal action in the UK on torture charges after activists said Monday they planned to proceed with a private prosecution. The expatriate officers are accused of directly engaging in torture against pro-democracy demonstrators, or directing others within the force

to carry out the crimes.

Torture has allegedly been carried out in police stations and on the streets, with an incident cited at Hong Kong's Citic Tower during protests in June 2019. The prosecution is being brought by prominent activists and lawyers, who are using a JustGiving page to raise \$260,000 to employ a full-time legal team.

— AFP

CITY UNREST

Mayor Lori Lightfoot says a neighbourhood protection programme has been activated

Chicago looting: More than 100 arrested, 13 officers hurt

Chicago, Aug. 10: Hundreds of people smashed windows, stole from stores and clashed with police early Monday in Chicago's upscale Magnificent Mile shopping district and other parts of the city.

At one point, shots were fired at police and officers returned fire, police spokesman Tom Ahern said on Twitter. No officers were injured in the shooting. Many of the businesses that were ransacked had recently opened after Chicago protests of George Floyd's May 25 death in Minneapolis devolved into chaos. It wasn't immedi-

ately clear what led to the unrest, which began shortly after midnight, but anti-police graffiti was seen in the area of the Magnificent Mile, which is one of Chicago's most-visited tourist attractions.

Hours earlier, dozens of people had faced off with police after officers shot and wounded a person Sunday in the city's Englewood neighbourhood, located about 10 miles (16 kilometres) away.

Asked for updates on the situation, Ahern said that police planned to hold a news conference Monday morning. Police Superin-

tendent David Brown and Mayor Lori Lightfoot were expected to attend.

Along the Magnificent Mile, people were seen going in and out of stores carrying shopping bags full of merchandise as well as at a bank, the *Chicago Tribune* reported, and as the crowd grew vehicles dropped off more people in the area. On streets throughout the downtown area, empty cash drawers from stores were strewn about and ATMs were ripped open.

Stores miles from downtown were also ransacked, with parking lots littered

● **ON STREETS** throughout the downtown area, empty cash drawers from stores were strewn about and ATMs were ripped open. Stores miles from downtown were also ransacked, with parking lots littered with glass and items from inside the stores.

with glass and items from inside the stores. Clothes hangers and boxes that once contained television sets and other electronics were seen — evidence that

thieves had taken racks of clothes and removed them from the hangers.

"This was obviously very orchestrated," the Rev. Michael Pfleger, a prominent Roman Catholic priest and activist on the city's South Side, told *WBBM-TV* as cameras panned the downtown area.

One officer was seen slumped against a building, several arrests were made and a rock was thrown at a police vehicle, the newspaper said. Police worked early Monday to disperse the crowds.

There was a large police presence Monday morning

outside an Apple store located north of Chicago's downtown area. Blocks away, debris was strewn in parking lots in front of a Best Buy and a large liquor store.

Train and bus service into downtown was temporarily suspended at the request of public safety officials, the Chicago Transit Authority said on Twitter. Bridges over the Chicago River were lifted, preventing travel to and from the downtown area, and Illinois State Police blocked some expressway ramps into downtown.

Chicago and its suburbs,

like many other cities, saw unrest following the death of Floyd. Chicago's central business district and its commercial areas were shut down for several days after violence erupted and stores were damaged in the wake of marches protesting Floyd's death.

In the Sunday shooting in Englewood, police said in a statement that they responded about 2:30 p.m. Sunday to a call about a person with a gun and tried to confront someone matching his description in an alley. He fled from officers on foot and shot at officers, police said.

— AP

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	38,182.08	0.37
Nifty 50	11,270.15	0.50
S&P 500*	3,349.35	-0.06
Dollar (₹)	74.89	0.06
Pound Sterling (₹)	97.77	0.35
Euro (₹)	88.12	0.59
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	56,122.238	0.42
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	45.03	0.63
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.893	0.007
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.558	-0.004

* As of 9:30 PM IST

BoP to be very strong this year: Piyush Goyal

India expects its balance of payments to be “very, very strong” this fiscal, aided by stronger than expected exports and a fall in imports, commerce minister Piyush Goyal said. “Exports have shown a good turnaround. We are in July at about 91 per cent export level of the previous year, July 2019, figures,” Goyal said at an industry event. “So broadly, our balance of payments this year is going to be very, very strong.”

₹10,000 cr Fund of Funds to be operational soon



To provide Rs 50,000 crore equity support to stressed MSME units, a Fund of Funds announced as part of the Rs 20.97 lakh crore Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan package is expected to get operation soon, SBI chairman Rajnish Kumar said. The objective of the Rs 10,000 crore Fund of Funds is to help MSMEs with growth potential when they are facing severe shortage of equity and low revenues.

Honda begins pre-launch bookings of Jazz

Honda Cars India Ltd (HCIL) said it has started pre-launch bookings of its refreshed premium hatchback, Jazz. The new Jazz can be pre-booked with an amount of Rs 21,000 at HCIL dealerships or online through 'Honda from Home' platform on the HCIL website with Rs 5,000, the company said. HCIL senior vice president and director, marketing & sales Rajesh Goel said the vehicle is slated for launch later this month.

LIC launches policy revival campaign

To encourage continuation of risk cover in this difficult period, LIC said it has provided an opportunity for policyholders to revive their lapsed policies. It has launched a special policy revival campaign from August 10 till October 9. “No concessions are being offered in medical requirements and the same are limited to late fee only; under plans other than term assurance and other high risk plans,” LIC said.

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■ No clear indications of temp jobs from sectors

Festival hiring yet to pick up

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, AUG. 10

Despite the festive season kicking off, hiring of temp staff to meet the seasonal demand in various sectors has not picked up. Even e-commerce, which has started its seasonal sales, is still cautious about hiring.

The temporary staff hiring for the festive season usually starts before August and goes on till December. However, by August the industry gets a clearer picture about the hiring trends.

As per the data from Indian Staffing Federation, in the second half of 2018, different sectors had hired around two lakh people for temp jobs. In 2019, despite the general gloom in the economy, hiring witnessed a 10 to 15 per cent growth over the previous year. However, this year ISF has not seen clear indications of hiring from across sectors yet.

“Usually, e-commerce, retail, consumer durables and BFSI are the major sectors which hire people to meet the festive season demand for additional hands,” said Lohit Bhatia, president, ISF.

This time, almost all the sectors are cautious about hiring more people as the existing staff is not fully engaged.

E-commerce, which has been the forerunner in terms of hiring in the past few years, has already started its festive season sales.



STILL GAUGING MARKET MOOD

- Temp staff hiring for the festive season usually starts by August and goes on till December
- In the second half of 2018, different sectors had hired around two lakh people for temp jobs
- This time, all sectors are cautious about hiring

However, when *Financial Chronicle* asked about this year's hiring, Amazon said, “currently, we do not have any information to share with regards to hiring ahead of the 2020 festive season.”

Last year, Amazon itself had created more than 90,000 seasonal employment opportunities across its fulfilment centres, sorting centres, delivery stations, partner fulfilment network and customer service sites.

This year, even during the lockdown in May, Amazon announced that it has opened close to 50,000 seasonal roles to meet the surge in demand for online products.

However, delivery services continued to be disrupted even after the lockdown.

“E-commerce may probably see a surge in sales due to the pent-up demand of the past few months. This would require more hands to deliver things to the customer. However, the social distancing norms will force them to limit the number of people who can be deployed at warehouses and other centres,” said Bhatia.

“As far as other sectors are concerned, businesses are still evaluating and waiting to see how the festive season shapes up. For them, it is still early days,” he added.

GMR, Saint Mary's ink pact to set up global school

Hyderabad, Aug. 10: GMR Hyderabad Aeropolis limited (GHAL) said on Monday that it has partnered with the city-based Saint Mary's Educational Society to set up an international school at the 'Hyderabad Airport City'.

The Sancta Maria International School, a K12 (kindergarten to 12th grade) institution, would come up on 15 acres at the Hyderabad Airport City and the residential academic facility is slated to be unveiled by 2022, a press release from the GMR group said.

The 'Edu Port' at the GMR Hyderabad Airport City today hosts the Schulich School of Business, Chinnmaya Vidyalaya, GMR Aviation Academy, Flight Simulation Technique Centre, CPM South Asia Training Centre and Pratt & Whitney India Training Centre, the release said.

Sancta Maria International School envisions to provide the highest standards of education, offering a great learning opportunity for students, the release said. —PTI

JSW Steel uses Covid to overhaul US biz

SWANSY AFONSO MUMBAI, AUG. 10

The coronavirus pandemic is accelerating India's most valuable steelmaker's plans to overhaul its loss-making US operations.

JSW Steel outlined plans two years ago to invest \$1 billion in the US to expand its global footprint. That plan was curtailed by an economic downturn and import tariffs imposed by President Trump, with the situation worsening with the virus outbreak.

The company will spend this year “in structurally fixing” its facilities as the pandemic has resulted in the “lowest spread US steel prices have seen in the last decade,” according to Parth Jindal, director of the US operations.

The steelmaker has idled its Ohio plant to begin upgrading its electric arc furnace and plans to restart production at the 1.5 million tonnes facility in March. It has also shut its pipe mill in Baytown to fix equipment and plans to automate and optimise operations to cut costs.

“Our plan is to reduce the



losses and be extremely frugal and focus on completing these projects,” Jindal said in an interview. “From next year onward, we truly believe the US operations will be well-positioned to be earnings-accretive to JSW Steel.”

As part of a shakeup, JSW last week brought in Mark Bush as the new chief executive officer for its US operations, replacing John Hritz, who will now focus on strategy and legal affairs.

The company has changed its focus from coils to slabs at its Ohio plant as “it is no secret that the US is extremely slab deficient,” Jindal said. —Bloomberg

LAND BANK TO HELP MSMEs IN THE WORKS: GADKARI

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO NEW DELHI, AUG. 10

In a bid to promote small shops and business houses, the Centre is mulling a land bank and social micro finance institute (SMFI) to assist the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

“We are working on the idea of a land bank and social micro finance institution which will be very helpful for entrepreneurs and persons who want to run small shops and businesses,” Nitin Gadkari, minister for MSMEs, said on Monday at a webinar.

Besides, the government is also planning to promote the manufacturing of selected products, especially agro-based and khadi products in the rural belts. The efforts are part of the government's Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan initiative to reduce the dependence of imports and push exports.

“Handloom, handicrafts, khadi industries and agro-based industries should be encouraged, especially in 115 aspirational districts in the country. We will have to plan special policies for agricultural, rural and tribal sector because they have huge potential of creating employment,” he said.

On the issue of delayed payments to MSME vendors, Gadkari said instructions have been given to all ministries and PSUs to clear pending bills within 45 days.

Tata Motors moves ahead of M&M in July retail sales

MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, AUG 10

Tata Motors, India's biggest automaker by revenues, overtook Mahindra, as the third largest in terms of total vehicles retailed in July, the latest Federation of Automobile Dealers Association (Fada) data showed on Monday.

It also revealed that Maruti Suzuki, India's top car maker and Hero MotorCorp, India's largest motorcycle maker, strengthened their pole positions in the pandemic-hit market.

However, the passenger vehicle (PV) retail sales last month declined 25.19 per cent year-on-year to 1,57,373 units, as the pandemic continued to impact vehicle off-takes.

This is the first time the auto dealers' body has released market share data based on vehicle registration. The Society of Indian Auto-mobile Manufacturers (SIAM) releases data based on wholesale numbers (dispatches to dealers).

Tata Motors' retails increased to 12,753 units



in July, rising its market share up to 8.10 per cent from 6.07 per cent in the year-ago period. But registration of Mahindra vehicles dropped to 7,811 units last month, bringing down its market share to 5 per cent, down from 8.47 per cent in the same month last year.

The top two car makers, Maruti and Hyundai, strengthened their lead in the market in terms of market share even as volumes saw a year-on-year drop owing to the pandemic. Maruti's share jumped from 47.24 per cent to 50.40 per cent. Hyundai's share inched up to 18.69 per cent from 18.33 per cent in the year ago period.

Kia Motors India, one of

the latest entrants in the PV market cornered 4.45 per cent in July. French carmaker Renault India too showed a smart recovery during the month, gaining share—it went up to 3.18 per cent from 2.04 per cent in the same month last year.

Most of the other PV makers saw a year-on-year drop in their share of the market, according to Fada data.

Among the two-wheeler makers, with the exception of market leader, Hero MotoCorp which saw its share go up to 40.66 per cent in July against 35.61 per cent last year, most of the other two-wheeler makers saw their share declined.

Commercial vehicle sales, a barometer of economic activity, declined 72.18 per cent year-on-year to 19,293 units, while total sales across categories declined 36.27 per cent to 11,42,633 units last month.

Two-wheeler sales declined 37.47 per cent to 8,74,638 units last month, while total sales across categories declined 36.27 per cent to 11,42,633 units last month.

IndiGo to raise up to ₹4,000 crore via QIP

New Delhi, Aug. 10:

IndiGo's parent company InterGlobe Aviation on Monday said it will raise up to Rs 4,000 crore through a qualified institutional placement (QIP).

The aviation sector has been hit hard due to travel restrictions amid the coronavirus pandemic. Consequently, IndiGo has

cut salaries of senior employees and fired 10 per cent of its workforce during the last few weeks.

InterGlobe Aviation informed the BSE that its board of directors has approved “the raising of funds for an aggregate amount of not exceeding Rs 4,000 crores through an issue of equity shares by

way of qualified institutional placement.”

InterGlobe had on July 29 announced a massive loss of Rs 2,844 crore for the quarter ended June 30. In the corresponding period a year ago, it had posted a net profit of Rs 1,203 crore.

Domestic flights resumed in India after a gap of two months on May 25. —PTI

Investors book profit, equity MFs see ₹2,500 cr outflow

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, AUG. 10

Investors are opting for debt mutual funds, gold and overseas funds and booking profit in equity and hybrid mutual fund categories after a sharp rally in the equity market, latest July month data released by the Association of Mutual Funds in India showed.

The mutual fund industry's total asset under management (AUM) rose to Rs 27.11 lakh crore as on July 31 as against Rs 25.48 lakh crore in June, aided by Rs 91,391.73 crore inflow in various debt fund categories.

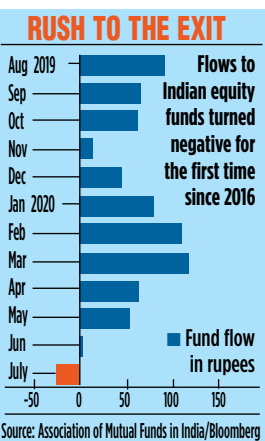
All equity oriented schemes barring tax-saving equity-linked savings scheme (ELSS) saw combined outflow of Rs 2,480.35 crore and all hybrid schemes like balanced and aggressive hybrid funds saw combined outflow of Rs 7,301.29 crore.

G Pradeepkumar, CEO, Union AMC, said, “For the first time in as many as four years, equity funds as a category has witnessed negative net flows to the

tune of Rs 2,480 crore. This is partly because of profit booking after a strong rally since the end of March 2020.”

“It appears that a good chunk of this money has moved to short-term debt funds. These investors could be waiting for a correction to re-enter the market,” Pradeepkumar said.

Other exchange traded funds (ETFs) saw inflows of Rs 13,125.61 crore largely on account of Bharat Bond NFO Tranche II receiving applications amounting to Rs 10,992 crore.



Source: Association of Mutual Funds in India/Bloomberg

Gold ETF AUMs make a new high

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, AUG. 10

Assets managed by Indian gold ETFs touched a new high of Rs 12,940 crore in July, surpassing the previous high set in January 2013. Cumulative AUMs of 11 gold ETFs grew 19 per cent in July to Rs 12,940 crore against Rs 10,857 crore in June.

This is the highest level AUMs have touched since these funds were launched in the market. The previous high was recorded in January 2013 when gold ETF assets stood at Rs 12,057 crore. As gold prices kept falling from their highs, AUMs had dipped to Rs 4,300 crore levels in the subsequent years due to continuous outflow.

Ferrero family scion takes side bets in cookies

BEN STUPPLES AUG. 10

Michele Ferrero helped introduce Nutella and Kinder chocolate to the world, turning his family's Italian confectionary business into a global giant with annual sales of about \$10 billion. Now his son, Giovanni, is charting his own path.

Net assets of Giovanni's investment firm, CTH, surged 40 per cent last year to 2.8 billion euros (\$3.3 billion), filings show. The increase was boosted by its \$300 million purchase of Danish cookie baker Kelsen Group, an acquisition designed to help preserve Italy's biggest fortune by investing beyond the confectionary industry. Giovanni has “established his presence in the wider sweet packaged-food market” with CTH, said Guido Giannotta, a director of the Brussels-based firm, who helps manage the Ferrero family's fortune. Such a move will “represent an important de-risking solution,



both in terms of product categories and geographical reach,” he added.

Like the Ferreros, many of the world's richest individuals are diversifying their fortunes as they seek to grow wealth across generations. Zara founder Amancio Ortega-Spain's richest person—invested the proceeds from his clothing business Inditex SA into real estate worldwide, while Microsoft Corp co-founder Bill Gates' holdings range from rail-

roads to agricultural businesses to construction firms.

The Ferreros' business began as a family pastry shop in northern Italy that used hazelnuts as a way to stretch limited cocoa supplies. After World War II, it grew into a confectionary firm, opening production facilities and offices abroad. It launched the Nutella and Kinder Chocolate and Tic Tac mints brands in the 1960s and then expanded with products, including Ferrero Rocher.

CTH was created in 2016 and owns Belgian cookie maker Delacre and US candy company Ferrara in addition to Kelsen Group. Ferrero Group—the family's confectionary business—has also invested beyond candy, completing a \$1.3 billion deal last year for Kellogg Co's cookies and fruit snack brands.

Giovanni, 55, is executive chairman of Ferrero Group and owns a controlling stake in the Alba, Italy-based company, which is now valued at \$23 billion, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index. It makes up the bulk of the Ferrero family's \$32.9 billion fortune.

Investing in cookies “makes sense as chocolate and biscuits fight for the same space in our stomachs,” said Duncan Fox, a consumer products analyst at Bloomberg Intelligence. “If you can get the right innovation, you get far greater distribution if you have exposure to both.”

—Bloomberg

Analysts from Edelweiss Securities said, “What is noteworthy here is a clear time-bound & specific item-wise imports embargo to help the manufacturers (especially private sector) prepare better and commit more investments across the value chain (Tier I, II, III, components manufacturer etc). We would like to believe that Tier-I integrators will reap greater benefits over next two to three years as their supply-chain (MSMEs, private sector) will further strengthen augmenting their systems delivery capabilities, with respect to timeline as well as complexity.”

“We are positively surprised with the pace of policy announcement, which is far more specific and includes clear timelines,” Edelweiss Securities said.

SHORT TAKES

France's Fiona is victorious in Italy

Palermo: Fiona Ferro of France upset fourth-seeded Anett Kontaveit of Estonia in the Palermo Ladies Open final to win the first four-level tennis title in five months.

Ferro, who is ranked 53rd in the world, won 6-2, 7-5 on Sunday. She had lost just one set on her way to the final. It was Ferro's second WTA title and the 23-year-old sealed it on her second championship point when Kontaveit hit a return long. Kontaveit has lost five of the six finals she has contested. It was the first official tennis event — for men or women — since March when the coronavirus pandemic shut down sports across the globe. There were strict health protocols, including fewer ball kids, a limited number of fans and no post-match handshakes between opponents. Players and officials for the tournament were tested every four days for Covid-19 and one player who tested positive withdrew over the weekend. — AP

Deepa sees 10+ Para medals

New Delhi: India's first-ever woman Paralympic medalist, shot-putter Deepa Malik believes the country's medal count will be in double digits at the Tokyo Games next year.

"At Rio we had doubled the medals, we were a squad of 19. We had two gold, a silver and a bronze. In 2018 (Asian Para Games), we were a squad of 194 and won 72 medals. It has already set the benchmark," Malik told paddler Mudit Dani during his chat show, *In The Spotlight*.

"The sensational thing about Tokyo next year will be India bagging Paralympics medals in double digits," she added. Malik has never let her disability come in the way of her passion. She had taken inspiration from the injured soldiers of the Kargil war when, in 1999, she was told that she would need a surgery to remove a spinal tumour. "The hospital to which I was taken for my surgery was full of war casualties. I think that immediately became my inspiration. If these healthy young men were losing a limb in their line of duty, then I have no reason to crib just because I have a disease," she said. — PTI

India Taekwondo gets shot in the arm

Mumbai: India Taekwondo has its eye set to the future in the field of competitive sport. The federation has now set up a referee commission and athlete commission to make sure the athletes are given the best possible facilities.

Namdev Shirgaonkar, president of the India Taekwondo, said, "I am happy that we are finally ready to launch into the future of India Taekwondo and am immensely thankful to World Taekwondo for their unconditional support. I am confident that the referee and athlete commission formed will do their best in providing efficient training and education for the referees and athletes respectively. Our main focus is to build up confidence in athletes to plan the road map & support them as much as we can." The referee commission formed will look into the training of the referees in order to make sure fair play is followed, along with an understanding of all the rules and regulations as per the guidelines of World Taekwondo.

ALEX KEEPS POINT SCORING RUN AT BRNO

Brno, Czech Republic: The Repsol Honda Team took steps forward on a demanding Sunday as a difficult Brno weekend came to a close, Alex Marquez and Stefan Bradl ready to come back stronger in Austria next week.

Blue skies welcomed the MotoGP World Championship to the third race of the 2020 MotoGP World Championship at the Automotodrom Brno. After sweltering conditions in Spain, the 46°C track temperature seemed pleasant in comparison. A focused Alex Marquez put a disappointing qualifying result behind him as his Sunday preparations began.

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TWIST IN THE TALE

Yoga guru Ramdev's Patanjali eyes IPL sponsorship

New Delhi, Aug. 10: The new IPL title sponsor to replace Chinese mobile phone company Vivo will hold the rights for only a four-and-a-half-month period and the highest bid may not necessarily end up being the winning one, the BCCI stated on Monday.

Vivo, which had a ₹440 crore per year deal for five seasons, has suspended its partnership with the Board due to the Sino-India border stand-off.

Baba Ramdev's Patanjali has shown interest in becoming the new title sponsor. "We are considering the IPL title sponsorship for this year since we want to give the Patanjali

brand a global marketing platform," Patanjali spokesperson S. K. Tijarawala was quoted as saying.

BCCI floated the tender invite for a new sponsor on Monday. Secretary Jay Shah announced a 13-point clause for submission of the bids from interested "third parties" and the winner will be announced on August 18. The last date for submission of bids is August 14.

"The Rights are available for the period from August 18, 2020 to December 31, 2020," the BCCI press release stated.

"Details regarding the Rights and product categories in which the Rights

● **The BCCI has invited tenders for IPL sponsorship for a four-month period. However, the highest bidder is not a guaranteed winner, who will be announced on August 18.**

are available will be provided only to parties who submit the EOI and are found eligible," it stated.

The BCCI also stated that bidding the highest amount may not fetch the rights for a company if the board is not satisfied with its plans on commer-

cialising its most precious property. "...it is clarified that BCCI shall not be obliged to award the Rights to the third party which indicates willingness to pay the highest fees in the course of discussions/ negotiations with BCCI after submitting an EOI," the BCCI stated.

"BCCI's decision in this regard will also depend on a number of other relevant factors, including but not limited to, the manner in which the third party intends to exploit the Rights and the potential impact of the same on brand IPL..." the BCCI release stated.

"...(it) will be exam-

ined/evaluated by BCCI in the course of discussions/negotiations with interested third parties who submit an EOI," it added.

It can now be safely assumed that BCCI will get a lesser valuation for a four-month period compared to Vivo which had the rights for a bigger duration.

According to the BCCI's norms for accepting the 'Expression of Interest' (EOI), "...turnover of the interested third party must be over ₹300 crore (Indian Rupees Three Hundred Crores only) as per the last audited accounts."

— PTI

ICC MEETING ENDS IN A DEADLOCK

New Delhi, Aug. 10: The ICC Board of Directors meeting on Monday ended up being a damp squib after they failed to reach consensus over Shashank Manohar's replacement as the next chairman of cricket's global governing body.

The sole agenda of Monday's meeting was to finalise the nomination process for the election but no breakthrough could be made over a unanimous choice to lead the International Cricket Council (ICC).

"Yes, there was no unanimity on a number of issues. Firstly, there is a divided house on whether there should be simple majority or the existing 2/3rd majority in a house of 17," an ICC Board member said.

However, the bigger issue is lack of an acceptable face and there is no clarity yet over BCCI president Sourav Ganguly throwing his hat in the ring.

There are multiple candidates who are harbouring ambitions of leading the ICC. "Colin Graves (England) is a strong candidate but it can't be said that he is favourite anymore. There are countries which won't support Graves. Similarly, someone like Dave Cameron (former Cricket West Indies president) may enter the fray with support of two independent directors but may not get enough numbers. Ditto for Chris Nenzani (South Africa)," a former ICC Director, who is abreast of the latest developments, said.

The veteran administrator made it clear that at this point, no potential candidate has numbers to go the distance and that's the precise reason that the board is not able to come up with an uniform election process.

"The best solution is to have a candidate acceptable to all and avoid an election which creates a tense atmosphere between member nations. But yes, I agree that by now, we should have been able to finalise the nomination process," the official said.

Sixth player from hockey team +ve

New Delhi, Aug. 10: Indian hockey team forward Mandeep Singh has tested positive for Covid-19, becoming the sixth national player to contract the dreaded infection, the Sports Authority of India (SAI) said on Monday.

The 25-year-old from Jalandhar is asymptomatic and is being treated along with the other five players by doctors in Bengaluru, where the national camp is due to start on August 20 at the SAI centre.

"Mandeep Singh, a member of the Indian Men's Hockey team, who was given the Covid test (RT PCR) along with 20 other players at the National Camp at SAI's National Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru, has tested Covid positive, but is asymptomatic," the SAI said in a statement.

"He is being administered treatment by doctors, along with the other five players who have tested positive."

Indian captain Manpreet Singh and four other players had tested positive for Covid-19 last week after returning to the SAI Centre following a month-long break.

— PTI

LAKRA LOOKS UP TO SENIOR RUPU FOR TIPS

New Delhi, Aug. 10: When playing hockey, Indian junior team defender Pratap Lakra watches, learns and takes inspiration from seniors Rupinder Pal Singh's dragflicking abilities and Birendra Lakra's game, but is right now busy doing duty as ticket collector in the railways.

Since his entry into the junior national camp in 2017, Pratap knew only hard work would help him don the senior team jersey.

"Since the senior team also trains in Bengaluru where we have our national camp, whenever we have a rest day or when the senior team is playing an internal match, we go and watch them," he was quoted as saying in a Hockey India press release.

"I particularly follow Rupinder Pal Singh for his dragflick execution and in terms of defence and game I follow Birendra Lakra," he said.

— PTI

EX-BANGLA CRICKETER CATCHES CORONAVIRUS

Dhaka, Aug. 10: Former Bangladesh left-arm spinner Mosharraf Hossain, who has represented the national team in five ODIs, has tested positive for Covid-19.

The 38-year-old, who had undergone four months of intense treatment including a surgery for brain tumour, contracted the infection after his father also tested positive for the contagious disease.

He was diagnosed with a brain tumour last year. Mosharraf is doing fine and has self-isolated himself at home after receiving the result of his Covid test on Sunday. "My wife and my child however tested negative and they are living with her parents," Mosharraf was quoted as saying by *The Daily Star*.

— PTI



England batsman Jos Buttler plays a shot during the fourth day of the first Test against Pakistan at Old Trafford in Manchester on Saturday.

— AP

Angry old Anderson is still hungry for more

Manchester, Aug. 10: James Anderson insisted Monday he was still "hungry" to play Test cricket after speculation the England great was considering retirement.

Anderson recently turned 38, an age where many previous pace bowlers would have long since retired. Given his age, Anderson's meagre match haul of 1-97 during England's three-wicket win in the first Test against Pakistan inevitably led to speculation about his future.

By his own admission, Anderson, England's all-time leading wicket-taker, "did not bowl very well" at his Old Trafford home ground, where one of the ends is named after him, as England went 1-0 up in a three-match series.

I want to play as long as I possibly can. If I keep bowling the way I did this week, the opportunity to retire will be taken out of my hands. It will be a selection issue.

— JAMES ANDERSON
England pacer

But the swing specialist, whose 590 wickets are the most taken by any pacer in Test history, said he should not be written off after one poor game. "I want to play as long as I possibly can," Anderson told reporters during a conference call on Monday.

"If I keep bowling the way I did this week, the opportunity to retire will

be taken out of my hands. It will be a selection issue," he added ahead of Thursday's second Test at Southampton.

"I'm still hungry to play the game. I think the frustration for me this week was that, after one bad game... the sort of whispers (about retirement) that go around, I don't think that's really fair," Anderson said.

Reflecting on his own performance in the first Test, Anderson said: "It's one of those things, everyone has a bad game, every now and then. I've not bowled very well and felt out of rhythm. For the first time in probably 10 years I got a little bit emotional on the field, got a bit frustrated, let it get to me a little bit."

— AFP



Max Verstappen jubilates after winning the Formula One race at the Silverstone circuit on Sunday.

— AP

Mercedes' otherwise flawless car this year.

Hamilton had only won the British GP at the same track a week earlier after surviving a last-lap puncture as Verstappen closed in.

Mercedes chief Toto Wolff conceded his team had failed to deliver after starting with Valtteri Bottas on pole and Hamilton second in their 67th front row lockout.

Verstappen started

fourth and won by 11 seconds, a luxury that afforded him several light-hearted quips on his way to victory and a poor sign for Mercedes heading into the weekend's Spanish GP in Barcelona.

"It was a difficult day in the office," admitted Wolff, adding, "We have a handful of days to find out what exactly caused our issues today, come up with solutions, test them in Barcelona and then hopefully have a better race on Sunday."

The somewhat haunted looks on the Mercedes pit wall as their Pirelli tyres blistered over and again told its own story and Red Bull team chief Christian Horner, suggested their car, with its phenomenal levels of downforce, was almost too strong and too fast for the softer tyres introduced.

— AFP

Lillard's half-ton powers Portland

Miami, Aug. 10: Portland's Damian Lillard poured in 51 points against a Philadelphia team missing injured stars Joel Embiid and Ben Simmons, powering the Trail Blazers to a 124-121 victory in their NBA match on Sunday.

Lillard, taunted on social media after two key missed free throws in a Saturday loss to the Los Angeles Clippers, unleashed the 10th 50-point performance of his career and fifth of the season to pull Portland within a half-game of Memphis for eighth in the Western Conference play-off fight.

"This was different because our season was on the line. We drop this one and we don't control our destiny. I thought we answered the call down the stretch," Lillard said.

Lillard hit 16-of-28 shot from the floor, 4-of-12 from 3-point range, and 15-of-16 from the free throw line and dished out a game-high seven assists.

The Blazers (33-39) and Memphis (33-38) are trying to hold off San Antonio (31-38) and Phoenix (31-39) for

spots in next weekend's play-in series for the last West playoff berth. Portland's win eliminated New Orleans and Sacramento.

In another match, Cameroon playmaker Pascal Siakam scored a game-high 26 points to spark Toronto over Memphis 108-99, clinching the second seed in the Eastern Conference play-offs for the defending champion Raptors (50-19).

Memphis, led by 25 points from Dillon Brooks, missed a chance to clinch a play-in series berth. The Grizzlies are 1-5 in bubble games.

San Antonio, trying to reach the playoffs for a 23rd consecutive season, pulled within a game of Memphis by beating New Orleans 122-113. DeMar DeRozan scored 15 of his 27 points in the fourth quarter to ignite the Spurs' attack and subdue rivals.

Jayson Tatum scored 29 points, five in the final minute of regulation time and five more in overtime, to spark the Boston Celtics over Orlando 122-119.

— AFP