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KOLKATA | NEW DELHI | SILIGURI | BHUBANESWAR



'INFLUENCE OF  
DICTATORSHIP ON  
DEMOCRACY RISING'

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INDIAN-AMERICAN  
WOMEN IN THE  
SPOTLIGHT

P7



PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION

PANTHER STAR  
DIES AFTER BATTLE  
WITH CANCER

P10

CORONAVIRUS IN  
THE BUBBLE OF  
BIO-SECURITY

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## WEATHER

Generally cloudy sky with light to moderate rain/thunder-showers. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 33 and 25 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: 023.2 mm

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 98% Min: 65%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 35.0°C (1) Min: 24.8°C (-2)  
SUN RISES 05:59 hrs SUN SETS 18:45 hrs  
MOON RISES 17:13 hrs MOON SETS 03:55 hrs

## THUMBNAILS



Boys playing cricket amidst the coronavirus pandemic situation, in the Capital on Saturday.

SUBRATA DUTTA

**Raina pulls out of IPL:** Chennai Super Kings all-rounder Suresh Raina has pulled out of the Indian Premier League (IPL) citing "personal reasons", the franchise said on Saturday even as it emerged that a second player in the team has tested positive for Covid-19. The player who has tested positive is a right-handed top-order batsman, who has been a part of India A teams in recent past. On Friday, a T20 specialist pacer had tested positive along with 12 members of the contingent in Dubai.

P12

**Humpy takes India to Chess Olympiad final:** Koneru Humpy took the spotlight as she beat Monika Socko in a nervy tie-break to help India pip Poland in the semifinals and reach the summit clash of the FIDE Online Chess Olympiad on Saturday. After the two teams won one round each in regular play, world rapid champion Humpy was pitted against Socko for the Armageddon (a tie-break), and the Indian beat her rival in style with black pieces. India will play the winner of the other semifinal between Russia and the USA, in the summit clash on Sunday.

SEE PAGE 12

**BSF detects tunnel along India-Pak border in Jammu**

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, 29 AUGUST

Troops of the Border Security Force (BSF) detected a nearly 170 metres long tunnel beneath the international border (IB) in the Samba district of Jammu that the force said was built by Pakistani agencies to push trained terrorists into India.

The Inspector General of BSF (Jammu Frontier) NS Jamwal said on Saturday that the tunnel was detected beneath the fence at the India-Pakistan border. The tunnel starts from Pakistan and ends on the Indian side in Samba.

We were getting inputs about the existence of a tunnel in Samba area and a special team found the tunnel on Friday. The mouth of the tunnel was reinforced with sandbags that have markings of made in Karachi, Pakistan... The tunnel could not have been dug without concur-



rence of the Pakistani Rangers who guard their borders and intelligence agencies, Jamwal said.

Following inputs about existence of the tunnel, the BSF started a special anti-tunneling drive all along the IB in Jammu region. A BSF patrol while carrying out in-depth scanning of area, detected a tunnel approximately 25 feet deep and about 3 to 4 feet in diameter in the Indian terri-

tory near the border fencing in Galar area. About 10 Pakistan made sand bags with marking of Shakargarh/Karachi factories were also found at the mouth of the tunnel.

The tunnel opening is located around 170 metres from IB on Indian side in the field of a local farmer. The tunnel's origin is in Pakistan territory near their "Gulzar" border post close to the IB.

PTI

**RIL acquires Future Group for ₹24,713 cr**

NEW DELHI, 29 AUGUST

Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries on Saturday announced the acquisition of the Future Group for Rs 24,713 crore to bolster its fast growing retail business.

"Reliance Retail Ventures Ltd (RRVL), subsidiary of Reliance Industries, will acquire the retail and wholesale business and the logistics and warehousing business from the Future Group as going concerns on a lump sum basis for lumpsum aggregate consideration of Rs 24,713 crore," the company said in a statement.

Through the deal, Reliance Industries will acquire Future Retail that owns the BigBazaar chain that sells everything from groceries to cosmetics and apparel, and Future Lifestyle Fashions Ltd that operates fashion discount chain Brand Factory.

PTI

**Cong writes to Facebook CEO again over bias allegations**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 29 AUGUST

The Congress on Saturday wrote to Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg for the second time in a month, asking what steps were being taken on repeated allegations about the global social media giant's India unit being biased towards the ruling BJP.

The Congress also demanded an investigation by a Joint Parliamentary Committee into the alleged "links of Facebook employees and the ruling establishment". "The investigation must include how Facebook manipulated voter opinion, allowed hate speech and was oblivious to fake news, even when they were in clear violation of their own regulations," party spokesperson Pawan Khera and AICC data analytics department chief Praveen Chakravarty told reporters.

The letter to Zuckerberg came over an article in Time



magazine, which the party said "revealed" more information and "evidence of biases and a quid pro quo relationship" of Facebook India with the BJP. There was no immediate reaction from Facebook or the BJP on the allegations. A report in the Wall Street Journal earlier this month had raised similar allegations, which were rejected by both Facebook and the BJP.

Tagging the Time magazine report, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi claimed in a tweet that it exposes the "WhatsApp-BJP nexus". "Used by 40 Cr Indians, WhatsApp also wants to be used for making payments for which Modi

Government's approval is needed. Thus, BJP has a hold over WhatsApp," he alleged, without elaborating. Messaging app WhatsApp is also owned by Facebook.

In its earlier letter, the party had asked Facebook to investigate the allegations made in the Wall Street Journal article that the social media platform refused to apply hate speech rules to certain BJP politicians. "We draw your attention to the article in Time magazine dated August 27 that reveals more information and evidence of biases and a quid-pro-quo relationship of Facebook India with the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party," Congress general secretary KC Venugopal wrote in the new letter dated August 29. "We will also be pursuing legislative and judicial actions in India to ensure that a foreign company cannot continue to cause social disharmony in our nation for their pursuit of private profits," he said.

**India pulls out of Russian war games; Chinese presence a factor**

NEW DELHI, 29 AUGUST

India has withdrawn from the multi-nation military exercise to be hosted by Russia next month, apparently because China and Pakistan will also be participating in it.

According to sources, Moscow has been informed that the decision has been taken in view of the worsening global Covid-19 situation. India alone has been witnessing more than 70,000 positive cases daily.

The exercise is scheduled to be held in the Astrakhan region of southern Russia from 15-26 September.

"A high-level meeting was held in South Block in which External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Chief of Defence Staff Gen Bipin Rawat were present. The meeting discussed if it would be right to take part in the multilateral exercise where Chinese and Pakistani military personnel would also be present. The meeting also reviewed the situation arising from the increasing number of corona cases in the country," sources said. It was felt that it could not be business as usual with China at a time when Indian troops are involved in a tense military stand-off with PLA troops at eastern Ladakh.

A number of member nations of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) are expected to participate in the exercise.

India had earlier planned to send around 150 Indian Army troops, 45 Indian Air Force personnel and a number of Navy officers for the exercise. India's reconsideration on its participation in the military drill comes ahead of defence minister Rajnath Singh's scheduled visit to Russia next week to attend a crucial meeting of the SCO.

**'Letter misconstrued; never sought leadership change'**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 29 AUGUST

Congress leader Jitin Prasada, one of the 23 leaders who wrote to party chief Sonia Gandhi seeking organisational changes, said on Saturday that the letter is being "misconstrued" and he has full faith in the top leadership.

In an exclusive interview to PTI, he said the letter was not written with the intention of leadership change.

Asked why he chose to sign the letter, Prasada said the "letter was written with the sole purpose of suggesting how

to reinvigorate and revitalise the party, and introspect for galvanising the organisation. It was not to undermine the top leadership. I had stated this at the Congress Working Committee meeting as well".

"The letter is being misconstrued," the former Union minister asserted.

On allegations by some party leaders that the intention was to target the top leadership, Prasada said, "I have full faith in the leadership of Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi and they have full faith in me."

His remarks assume sig-

nificance as they come days after the District Congress Committee of Lakhimpur Kheri hit out at the letter from the 'group of 23' and called for action against Prasada. Prasada said the resolution passed by the DCC seeking action against him could have

been the "result of local instigation of rival factions".

"These are small matters which happen in every democratic party and could be the result of local instigation of rival factions. I bear no grudge against anyone as everyone is part of the Congress family," the 46-year-old leader said.

"The Congress president has said that the matter stands closed and we have to concentrate on fighting the ruling dispensation," he said.

Asked about an audio clip that went viral on social media platforms in which Lakhimpur Kheri DCC chief pur-

portedly suggested that the resolution was passed following directives of AICC, Prasada said, "I don't comment on unverified media reports."

On the way forward after the controversy surrounding the letter, he said important elections were coming in Bihar, Bengal, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh, and "we will put our energy in fighting the communal forces".

Talking about his area of focus right now, Prasada said he is working for the non-political group 'Brahman Chetna Parishad' whose intention is not to garner votes, but to unite

the community which has been targeted recently.

Prasada, along with 22 other signatories that included the likes of Ghulam Nabi Azad, Kapil Sibal and Shashi Tharoor, had written to Sonia Gandhi, seeking an active and full-time party leadership among other organisational changes.

After the stormy Congress Working Committee meeting over their letter seeking urgent organisational reforms, several members of the group of 23 have stated that they are "not dissenters" but "proponents of revival".



*It's common during Onam that people celebrate by visiting their near and dear ones. But this time it should be avoided and it is best that all should opt for online methods of communication. It should be noted that there should be no public events*

PINARAYI VIJAYAN  
KERALA CHIEF MINISTER

# With 1,954 fresh cases, Delhi records another Covid spike

About 35 pc rise in demand for hospital beds for coronavirus patients in the national capital since July-end

SNS & PTI

NEW DELHI, 29 AUGUST

Delhi today recorded 1,954 fresh coronavirus (Covid-19) cases ~ the city's highest single-day Covid spike in August till date ~ which pushed its coronavirus case-load to 1,71,366, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

Fifteen fresh fatalities have been recorded today, which took Delhi's Covid death toll to 4,404 so far, the health bulletin said.

The city had recorded its previous highest spike of 1,840 fresh coronavirus cases on 27 August.

Yesterday, Delhi's Covid case count was 1,808, even as it recorded 20 deaths.

The active cases tally in the national capital rose to 14,040 from yesterday's 13,208.

The bulletin said that the cumulative number of recovered Covid patients increased to 1,52,922 while the recovery rate dipped to 89.23 per cent.

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

On 30 July, the occupancy of beds reserved for coronavirus patients was 18 per cent, with only 2,958 out of 16,038 beds being occupied. It was 23.02 percent on 10 August and 23.40



A woman and her child, wearing face masks amid the Covid pandemic, cross the road in the Capital on Saturday.

migrants workers from neighbouring states.

The number of new cases hovered around 1,000 in the beginning of August - 1,118 on 1 August and 961 on 2 August. The figure rose to 1,450 on 23 August and 1,840 on 27 August.

"Delhi would be witnessing a slight increase in the number of new cases because of various factors. People (migrants) are returning. Then there are people from other states who have come to the city for treatment," said Dr Desh Deepak, nodal officer for Covid-19 at Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital.

The government is gradually allowing businesses to reopen and other activities to resume under "unlock" period, he said.

Dr B L Sherwal, managing director of Rajiv Gandhi Super Specialty Hospital, a dedicated Covid facility, said the number of new cases is bound to increase with the easing of restrictions. "The occupancy of beds in the hospital had reduced to around 50 in the beginning of August. Now, it has again risen to more than 100," he said. "Our hospital is close to Uttar Pradesh. So, a number of people are coming in from there too."

With coronavirus cases being on the rise in Delhi, authorities have formed enforcement teams in its each district to ensure strict implementation of Covid guidelines.

The move comes days after Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal announced that stringent enforcement of Covid guidelines would be ensured in the city, asserting that everyone should wear a face mask and maintain social distancing at public places.

Each enforcement team will comprise of an executive magistrate and revenue and police personnel, said an official, adding that awareness teams have also been formed to encourage people to follow anti-Covid measures.

Earlier this week, the CM had said, "Do not be offended if police or any authority fines you for not wearing mask. This is for the safety of all. There is confidence among the people but it should not lead to complacency and neglect. We have all brought coronavirus under control with great difficulty, it cannot be allowed to increase."

The Kejriwal government recently decided that Covid tests would be doubled to 40,000 per day in view of increase of cases. It has maintained that aggressive testing and contact tracing would remain its main strategy to fight the Covid pandemic.

Out of 1,229 Covid ICU beds with ventilator support, 473 (38 per cent) were occupied, according to data shared by the hospitals on Delhi Corona app.

## Delhi BJP slams Kejri govt over huge power bills of consumers

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, 29 AUGUST

The power companies in Delhi are collecting huge electricity bills and fixed charges from all establishments including shops and industries that were closed during the lockdown and had not consumed electricity, Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta alleged today.

He demanded that the Delhi government should waive off the fixed charge for the last five months of the industrial and commercial electricity consumers of the national capital in view of the shutdown during the lockdown period.

The consumers should be allowed to pay their pending electricity bills in instalments, Gupta said in a statement.

Leader of the Opposition (LOP) in the Delhi Assembly, Ramvir Singh Bidhuri also came down heavily on the Delhi government, alleging that the

power consumption rates in Delhi are among the highest in the country.

He said that power consumers of all categories including domestic, industrial and commercial were not only paying hefty electricity bills, but also paying huge amount of fixed charges.

In his statement, Bidhuri also demanded that chief minister Arvind Kejriwal should waive off the fixed charge for the last five months of the industrial and commercial electricity consumers of the national capital in view of the shutdown during the lockdown period.

Refuting the claim made by Kejriwal that Delhi has the cheapest electricity in the country, Bidhuri alleged that the entire amount of pension of the employees of the power companies was being col-

lected from the electricity consumers of Delhi.

"Not only this, their

electricity consumption charges are also recovered from general consumers. Even if these people consume electricity up to 700 units, the bill comes to just 70 rupees, the rest of the expenditure are imposed on power consumers of Delhi," the LOP alleged, asking why the consumers of Delhi should pay the electricity consumption of these electricity workers.

Bidhuri sought to remind Kejriwal that before he became the CM the fixed charge in Delhi used to be Rs 10 per kWh per month, which, he claimed, has now shot up to Rs 125 per kWh per month.

There has been a sharp increase in power bills of consumers after Kejriwal assumed power in Delhi, Bidhuri alleged.

Delhi police commissioner S N Shrivastava on Saturday held a crime and Covid-19 review meeting through video-conferencing. He also rewarded personnel from Dwarka district and North district in recognition of their 'exemplary' recent work, according to a statement issued by the city police.

SNS

## Annual and devp fees can't be charged till schools reopen: HC

PTI

NEW DELHI, 29 AUGUST

The Delhi High Court has held that annual and development charges cannot be taken from the parents of students "during the pendency of the present lockdown", when schools are yet to reopen.

The prima facie opinion was expressed by Justice Jayant Nath in his order of August 25 while hearing a plea moved by the parents' association of a private school, which started taking the annual and development charges along with the tuition fees from July.

The court restrained the school from taking the annual and development charges from the parents for the month of July till further order.

After hearing both sides, the judge said, "In my opinion, prima facie, it appears that the annual and development charges cannot be charged from the parents during the pendency of the present lockdown."

The court has listed the

matter for further hearing on September 16.

According to the order, during the hearing via video-conference, the school contended that the lockdown is over and hence, it can levy the annual and development charges.

However, the Delhi government, represented by its Additional Standing Counsel Gautam Narayan, told the court that the Directorate of Education's April 18 circular, asking the schools not to charge the annual and development fees during the lockdown period, continues to apply as none of the schools has physically opened.

The Delhi government said therefore, the school in question cannot charge the annual and development fees till the completion of the lockdown period.

After hearing both sides, the judge said, "In my opinion, prima facie, it appears that the annual and development charges cannot be charged from the parents during the pendency of the present lockdown."

The court has listed the

### FOR A CAUSE



Media persons hold protest over atrocities against journalists and their killings, at Press Club of India in the Capital on Saturday.

Metro to run from 7 Sept in a calibrated manner: DMRC



FOTO PHOTO

SNS & PTI  
NEW DELHI, 29 AUGUST

After being closed since 22 March due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Delhi Metro has received the nod from authorities to resume its services from 7 September in a "calibrated manner", Metro officials said today.

Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal tweeted that he was "glad" the Metro services will resume operations in a phased manner in the next few days, the officials said.

The DMRC had last week said that it will be prepared to resume operations whenever directed by the government.

will be resuming its services for public from September 7 onwards in a calibrated manner," the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) said in a statement.

Further details on the Metro's functioning and its use by the general public will be shared once a detailed Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is issued by the Union ministry of housing and urban affairs in the next few days, the officials said.

The DMRC had last week said that it will be prepared to resume operations whenever directed by the government.

## JOBS & CLASSIFIEDS QUEST

### SITUATION VACANT

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## The Sunday Statesman

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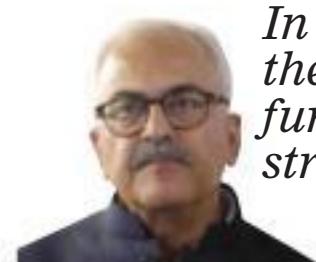
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### RANCHI

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In Unlock 4, which will come into effect from 1st September, 2020, the process of phased reopening of activities has been extended further. Lockdown, however, shall continue to be implemented strictly in the containment zones till 30th September, 2020.

AJAY BHALLA  
UNION HOME SECRETARY

The Sunday Statesman  
NEW DELHI, 30 AUGUST 2020

03

# Punjab Cong chief goes after party 'dissenters'

Sunil Jakhar charges that over 20 senior Congress leaders' letter to Sonia Gandhi to demand changes in the party betrayed their 'insecurities and political ambitions'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, 29 AUGUST

**D**ays after over 20 top Congress leaders sought discussion over the party's leadership issue by writing a letter to the party's interim president Sonia Gandhi, Punjab Congress chief Sunil Jakhar on Saturday said the "letter politics" seeking changes in the party reflected the "insecurities" and "political ambitions" of certain signatories.

"Now that Congress president had clearly stated the party organisation and president would be elected in six months, it was unfortunate that some leaders continue making unwanted statements," Jakhar said.

"Such statements become even more ridiculous as the demand for elections is being made by the leaders who either never contested the elections themselves or now even they themselves may not



remember when they contested last," he said.

Asserting that there were

inherent contradictions in the letter written by these Congress leaders, Jakhar said

they targeted Rahul Gandhi for "abetting division within the ranks" by holding Youth Congress elections, but, on the other hand, sought elections to be held from blocklevel to the national body despite the continuing coronavirus pandemic.

"Is it not applying double standards? Will these elections then not create rift in the party itself?" the Punjab Congress president questioned. Instead of giving a serious thought before making statements on the issue, "some leaders were trying only to protect their positions, which was a sign of frustration and weakness," he charged.

Jakhar recalled that in the Congress party's general meeting in 2018, the very leaders who were now talking about party elections had proposed that instead of holding the elections, the party president should be authorised to appoint the Congress Working Committee (CWC).

He said that a leader had tried to justify the CWC elections on the "pretext" that the person elected in this way will have a guaranteed tenure and would be able to speak his mind without fear of losing his seat. "I believe any person, whether elected or nominated, who doesn't have the courage of his conviction and is unable to speak his mind for fear of losing his position, has no right to be on the decision-making body of the party," Jakhar said.

He said some leaders had lost self-confidence and had forgotten how high their status in the party was. Jakhar said such status was not due to membership of any House but due to their experience and contribution to the party. "Those holding high positions in the party should realise that their political standing would not be affected with the expiry of their Rajya Sabha memberships," he added.

## Harsimrat seeks CBI probe into Punjab SC scholarship 'scam'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, 29 AUGUST



Union food processing industries minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal on Saturday urged Union social justice and empowerment minister Thawar Chand Gehlot to recommend a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) inquiry into the Rs 63 crore Scheduled Caste (SC) scholarship scam allegedly involving Punjab SC and backward classes minister Sadhu Singh Dharamsot.

In a letter to Gehlot, the Union minister said a CBI inquiry was necessary to recover the funds which had been embezzled at the instance of the minister so that they could be disbursed to the genuine beneficiaries.

The SAD has demanded

that all institutions against whom the government had ordered recoveries.

Badal said this was not all. "As per the report the minister also signed files bypassing departmental procedures and even objections by the principal secretary were removed from the file."

"The SAD has demanded

## No guilty in scholarship scam'd be spared: Capt

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, 29 AUGUST

not succumb to Opposition trial in the case.

However, there was no question of protecting or shielding anyone, and action under the law would be taken if anyone found guilty of any involvement in the case, he added. The CM also lashed out at the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) for behaving like a rogue party by baying for Dharamsot's blood without a proper inquiry.

"Do you really expect me to take action without a proper inquiry against my own minister when I have not done so even against many Opposition leaders," asked the CM adding Dharamsot

has already said he is ready to face any inquiry in the matter. Unfortunately, allegations and counter-allegations had become a way of life in Indian politics, he added.

Nobody is above the law, but everybody deserves a fair and proper inquiry, said Amarinder, adding that by making all that noise, AAP was only showing desperation to find political feet in the state, where they had been completely rejected by the people, ahead of the 2022 Assembly elections.

## HC asks DSSSB, MCDs to file status reports on steps taken to fill special educator vacancies

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 29 AUGUST

The Delhi High Court has directed the Delhi Subordinate Services Selection Board (DSSSB) and the municipal corporations to file status reports on steps taken by them to fill the vacancies of special educators in schools run by the civic bodies.

The court was informed by the counsel for DSSSB that out of the total requisition for 1,540 posts of Special Educators received till 2017, dossiers of 445 selected candidates were sent to the municipal corporations. The counsel said after relaxation of 10 years and one-time Central Teacher

Eligibility Test (CTET) relaxation, only 60 candidates have been found eligible, thereby leaving 935 unfilled vacancies for which fresh requisitions have to be received from the municipal corporations along with the presently available vacancies so that steps can be initiated for selection of eligible candidates. "Let a fresh status report be filed by DSSSB as well as the municipal corporations about the steps taken within a period of three weeks," Justice Sanjeev Sachdeva said.

The court listed the matter for further hearing on September 25. The counsel for the municipal corporations sought time to take instructions for special educators in the municipal corporation schools and also to indicate steps taken

for sending the requisition to DSSSB for selection of appropriate candidates.

Advocate Ashok Agarwal, appearing for petitioner NGO Social Jurist, argued that things have not moved "even an inch", authorities are not taking things seriously and children of the poor studying in government and MCD schools are "left at the mercy of God."

The high court was earlier informed that the Delhi lieutenant governor has granted relaxation of age and one-time relaxation of CTET qualification to those who had obtained it after the cut-off date but before their appointment for special educators in the municipal corporation schools.

## Uttarakhand BJP office shut after state party chief tests Covid +ve

DEHRADUN, 29 AUGUST



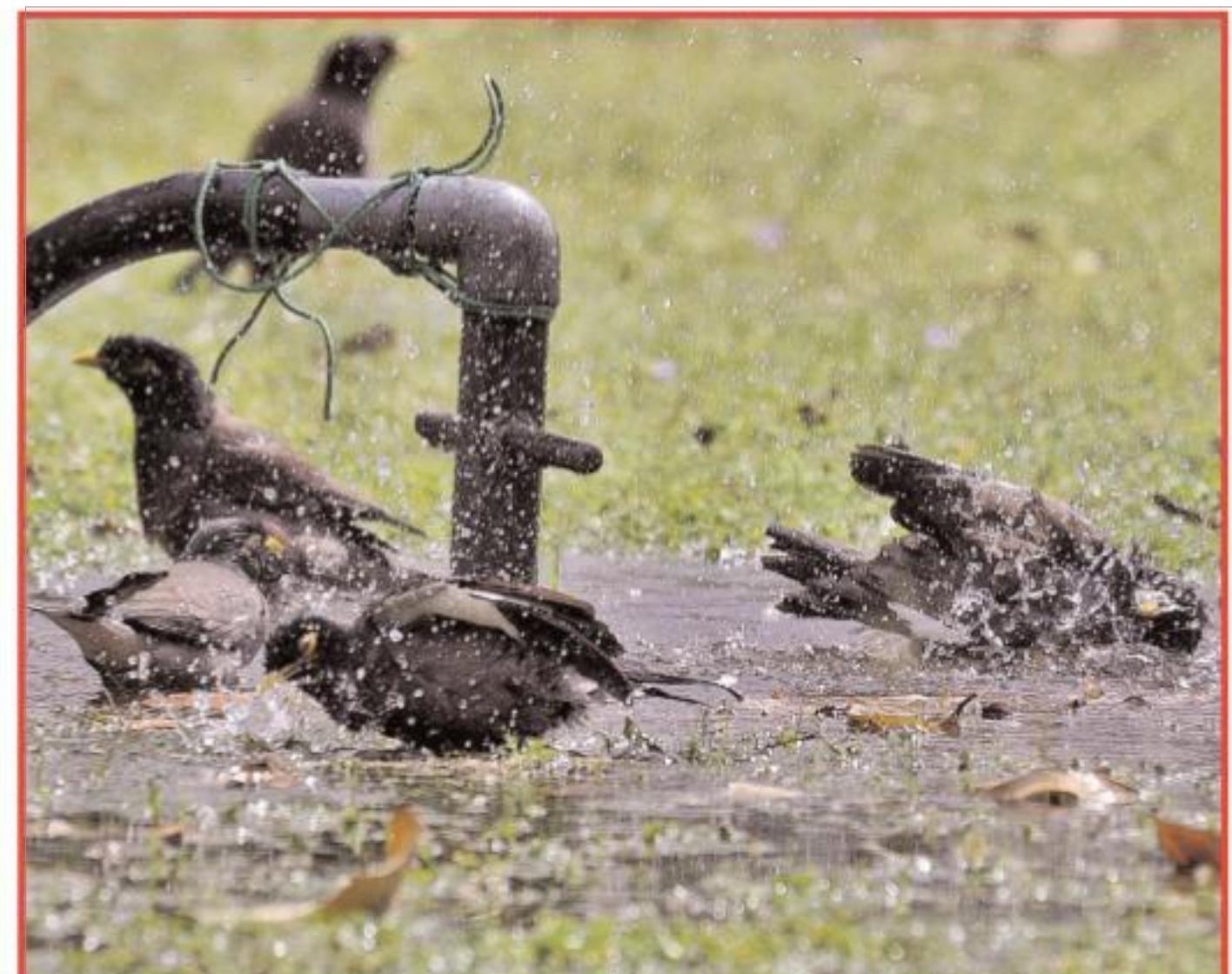
Uttarakhand CM Trivendra Singh Rawat with state BJP president Bansidhar Bhagat. FILE PHOTO

The Uttarakhand BJP decided to close its headquarters for two days after state party president Bansidhar Bhagat tested positive for coronavirus. The state BJP office in Dehradun remained closed on Saturday and will reopen on Monday after the completion of its sanitisation work. Uttarakhand BJP vice president Dr. Devendra Bhasin said, "The Covid-19 test report of Bansidhar Bhagat has come out positive and his treatment has started. We wish a speedy recovery to the state party chief. The office of Uttarakhand BJP will remain closed for sanitization work for two days." Besides Bansidhar Bhagat, his son was also test-

ed positive. The Uttarakhand BJP chief hosted a crowded press conference in Dehradun recently, to announce the re-induction of Khanpur MLA Kunwar Pranab Singh Champion in the party. Now all those who attended the programme are planning to isolate themselves.

SNS

## BIRD BATH



Birds soaking themselves in water on a sunny day, at Rose Garden in Sector 16 in Chandigarh on Saturday.

PARDEEP SAINI

## HP to come out with sports policy soon

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 29 AUGUST

Himachal Pradesh Forest, Youth Services and Sports Minister Rakesh Pathania on Saturday said the state government will soon bring Sports policy as the government understands the sentiments and feelings of every sportsperson.

Interacting with eminent sportspersons, Pathania said the state government would set up 10 more new indoor stadiums and also planned to double the present sports setup. "The state government has constructed five indoor stadiums, 6 outdoor stadiums, three 400-meter synthetic athletic tracks, a hockey Astro-Turf field, multi gyms at eight district headquarters and two sports hostels in recent years.

For the purpose of promotion of sportspersons in Himachal Pradesh, reserva-



tion of 3 percent in government jobs, arrangement of cash prizes at national and international level and special grants are being given to Sports Associations," he added.

On the request of sportsperson from Shimla through online interaction, the Minister assured them that possibilities would be explored and

efforts will be made to develop two more sports complexes in the state capital.

He further stated that recently he had a meeting with Union Sports minister Kiran Rijiju regarding liberal financial help to the state and he had assured him to help the State in all respect of sports infrastructure development.

Governor Bandaru Dattatreya said the importance of sports was vital in improving our physical and mental health. He suggested sportspersons to not give up the practice even during this pandemic period and said the player never loses nor should this feeling come in him only then he can achieve the goal.

"The small hill state like Himachal has several achievements in his name like three Padma Shri awards, one Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award, eight Arjuna Awards and 37 Parashurama Awards etc which is a matter of pride for us," he added.

Dattatreya said there was a big scope of development in the field of sports and Prime Minister Narendra Modi was ideal for all youth as he himself had been associated with sports organisations and practices yoga regularly.

Both these programs were designed in such a way to connect the youth of the country with sports, in which all the youth should come forward and show their abilities," he added.

He added sports activities were no longer limited to the sports sector but also proved to be an engine of economic development of the country and the state. Today, sports were part of the multi-billion rupees industry and businesses, which affect the economy, he added.

Atal Tunnel would provide all weather connectivity to Leh and forward areas of Ladakh, which remain cut off for nearly six months due to heavy snowfall. The tunnel will provide almost all-weather connectivity to the troops stationed in Ladakh, he added.

Thakur said that the Prime Minister was showing keen interest in early completion of this mega project, which would be not only important from strategic point of view, but would also give a boost to tourism activities in Lahaul-Spiti district of the State besides creating employment and self-employment avenues in the area.

The Chief Minister said that this project would be completed by spending an amount of Rs 3500 crore. He said that cutting through the Pir Panjal range, the tunnel has reduced the distance between Manali and Leh by 46 km. He said that the Atal Tunnel would be a boon to the residents of Lahaul

and Spiti Valley who remain cut off from the rest of the country in winters for nearly six months due to heavy snowfall.

The tunnel was originally designed as an 8.8 km long tunnel, but the fresh GPS readings taken by the BRO after the work on it was completed, showed that it was 9 km in length.

The tunnel would be the world's longest at an altitude of 3,000 metres and would reduce the distance between Manali and Leh by 46 kilometres.

Chief Engineer BRO Brigadier KP Purshothaman assured the Chief Minister that the project would be completed in a stipulated time period. He said that the tunnel also provides a telephone facility on every 150 metres, fire hydrant on every 60 metres, emergency exit on every 500 metres, turning cavern on every 2.2 km, air quality monitoring on every one km, broadcasting system and automatic incident detection system with CCTV cameras on every 250 metres.

## Cong politicising Covid pandemic: Jai Ram

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 29 AUGUST

**He further stated that the Centre had implemented New Education Policy in the country to provide employment oriented education to the students**

opment of the town and efforts are being made to provide better facilities to facilitate the tourists visiting the area," he added.

He said all developmental projects, foundation stones of which were laid by him today would be completed within the stipulated time period. Thakur said Rohtang Tunnel was the vision of former Prime Minister Late Atal Behari Vajpayee, which was fulfilled due to the efforts of PM Modi and would be dedicated by the Prime Minister by the end of Sep-



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 29 AUGUST

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur on Saturday visited the Atal Tunnel, Rohtang, and held a meeting with the Border Road Organisation (BRO) officials to review the progress of this tunnel work project.

Presiding over a meeting with

senior officers of Border Road Organisation (BRO) at Headquarter (Project) Atal Tunnel, Rohtang, the Chief Minister directed the BRO officials to expeditiously give final touch to the tunnel, so that the same could be made ready for inauguration by Prime Minister Narendra Modi by the end of September this year.

He said that the ambitious

Atal Tunnel would provide all weather connectivity to Leh and forward areas of Ladakh, which remain cut off for nearly six months due to heavy snowfall. The tunnel will provide almost all-weather connectivity to the troops stationed in Ladakh, he added.

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matic incident detection sys-

tem with CCTV cameras on every

250 metres.



Ram Janambhoomi-Babri Masjid land dispute was the most fiercely-contested cases in India's legal history in which every point was hotly debated

FORMER CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA RANJAN GOGOI

## THUMBNAILS



A young boy selling balloons waits for customers in Amritsar. AFP

**TN daily case-load tops 6000:** While the state contemplating an extension of lock down as there is no respite in Covid spread, the daily case load jumped the 6000 mark once again after almost two weeks gap. Tamil Nadu reported 6,352 new cases in the last 24 hours, taking the total tally in the state to 4,15,590 so far.

SNS

**Dalit man beaten up:** A 20 year-old Dalit man was beaten up in Vizag by his employer, the wife of a Telugu television celebrity who accused him of stealing a mobile phone. The youth, belonging to Mala community has lodged an FIR and the police have released the footage. SNS

**Kerala crosses 70k-mark:** Kerala on Saturday reported 2,390 new cases, taking the total number of persons affected in the state to 71,701. As many as 2,225 patients have recovered from the disease on the day.

SNS

**Serampore MP distributes flood relief:** The Serampore MP Mr Kalyan Banerjee, Mr Dilip Yadav the ruling party district president and other party workers reached out to the flood affected people of Khanakul. Ever since the people of Khanakul have been affected by the overflowing river banks of Rupnarayan, Mundeswari the district administration have been alert to promptly reach flood relief to the affected people.

SNS

**Rajnath to visit Russia next week for SCO meet**

NEW DELHI, 29 AUGUST

Amid the military stand-off between India and China at eastern Ladakh, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will visit Moscow next week to attend a crucial meeting of the members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) to be held on 4-5 September.

The meeting is also expected to be attended by the defence ministers of India's main adversaries, China and Pakistan, which too are the members of the SCO.

This will be Singh's second visit to Russia since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic.

He had last visited Moscow in June to represent India at the Victory Day parade.

Russian Defence Minister Sergey Shoygu yesterday met Indian Ambassador to Russia D Bala Venkatesh Varma on the margins of a defence expo and told him that he was looking forward to his Indian counterpart's visit, the Indian Embassy in Moscow said.

SNS

## TENDER

**NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY**  
(SURVEY & CONSTRUCTION)  
OPEN E-TENDER NOTICE (Single Packet System)  
Dy. Chief Engineer (Construction)-II,  
Opposite Railway Hospital, Hasanspura Road, New Delhi-110020  
30/2006 for and on behalf of the  
President of India invites Open E-Tender.  
Tender shall on-line submit their original revised offer before the  
date and time of closing of E-tender. 1.  
E-Tender Notice No.: NWRI/SC/Civil  
102140519. 2. Name of work :  
Location: Flash Butt Welding of 20 rail  
panels, New SH Free Rail 2 Rail  
panel 3 Rail panel 2 Rail panel  
site using Mobile Flash Butt Welding  
plant in entire jurisdiction of North  
Western Railway. 3 Approximate cost  
of work: Rs. 6,69,55,480.00. 4. Earnest  
Money to be deposited : Rs. 4,84,800/-  
5. Completion Period: 36 (Thirty Six)  
Months. 6. Closing Date & Time of  
submission of on line E-tender : Upto  
15.00 Hrs on 21.09.2020. 7 Website  
particulars where complete details of  
E-Tender can be seen is :  
[www.reps.org.in](http://www.reps.org.in)  
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## BJP will seek CBI probe into Hemtabad MLA's death: Kailash Vijayvargiya

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
RAIGANJ, 29 AUGUST

Swearing that the killers of former Hemtabad MLA Deben-Dranath Roy will not be spared, the All India Secretary of BJP Kailash Vijayvargiya said the party would knock on the door of the Supreme Court and ask for a CBI investigation into the case.

"We hope the court will order CBI investigation very soon. Then the mystery will unravel and the killers will be arrested. Recently Maharashtra government announced the murder of a Bollywood actor

as mere suicide just like the case of BJP MLA Deben-Dranath Roy. CBI started investigation following the Supreme Court's order and many clues

unraveled which may prove that the star was murdered. CBI started intensive investigation on it," said Vijayvargiya while meeting the

family members of the deceased BJP MLA at Balia in Bindra of Raiganj in North Dinajpur district today.

It was reported that Deben-Dranath was found hanging in front of a closed shop at Balia More, around 2 km away from his house in the morning on 13 July this year.

Both the family members and majority of the villagers claimed that he was killed and hanged. CBI investigation was demanded into this death.

But the state government ordered a CID investigation. Roy in 2016 won as CPI(M)

MLA from Hemtabad and in 2019 joined BJP.

He had a great influence with the residents of his constituency.

A section of BJP leaders claimed that in the 2021 assembly election Roy was sure to win with BJP ticket from Hemtabad. So he was killed.

The Central leaders met Chadiam Roy, wife of deceased Deben-Dranath Roy.

Chadiam was not happy with a CID investigation. She believes CID officials would not catch the criminals. She urged the Central leaders to take the matter to the CBI.

party chief Sonia Gandhi said she was hurt by the letter but now the issue is over.

Even after that, he (Azad) spoke to the media and posted about it on Facebook the next day," Naseeb Pathan, who was a party MLC between 2004 and 2016, said on Friday.

"As he has broken the party's discipline, he should be made 'azad' (free) and expelled from the party," he said. Pathan also released a video on social media over the matter.

## UP Cong leader demands Ghulam Nabi Azad's expulsion from party

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
LUCKNOW, 29 AUGUST

A Congress leader in Uttar Pradesh has said the party should expel Ghulam Nabi Azad, who was among the 23 signatories to a letter that called for an overhaul of the organisation.

The 23 Congress leaders wrote to party chief Sonia Gandhi, seeking an active and full-time leadership of the grand old party among other organisational changes.

"At the CWC meeting,

## Cong: Centre, Left sabotaging Kerala gold smuggling probe

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, 29 AUGUST

**Chennithala said the secret link between CPI-M and BJP are very active and that is why the investigation into the case is going in snail's pace. He urged that the probe agencies need to expedite the investigations in order to clear the doubts**

asked as to which circumstance the Union minister for state for external affairs has made statements that gold smuggling was carried out not through diplomatic baggage. After Anil Nambiar being questioned by Customs, the CPI-M, which has been on the defensive since the gold smuggling scandal broke out, has now trained its gun against BJP.

Nambiar's questioning has given the LDF and CPI-M an ammunition to corner the BJP. BJP cadres reportedly also concerned about the slow pace of the probe is moving and nothing concrete coming out from the probe, even after a lapse of one-and-a-half months probe.

## 'Influence of dictatorship on country's democracy rising'

Sonia addressed the foundation stone laying ceremony of the new Chh'garh Assembly building in Nava Raipur

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
RAIPUR, 29 AUGUST

Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Saturday said that anti-national and anti-poor forces were spreading hatred and "venom of violence" in the country, and the "influence of dictatorship" on our democracy was rising.

The founding fathers would have never imagined that the Constitution and democracy will be in danger 75 years after Independence as freedom of expression is in danger and democratic institutions are being ruined, she said.

Gandhi addressed the foundation stone laying ceremony of the new Chhattisgarh Assembly building in Nava Raipur, the upcoming new capital of the state, through a recorded video message in Hindi.

"For the past some time, an attempt is being made to derail our country. New challenges have come up before

our democracy. Today, the country stands at a crossroads," she said in the message.

"Anti-poor and anti-national forces and those who rule by making people fight against each other have been spreading hatred and venom of violence," she said.

"Bad thinking is dominating good thinking, freedom of expression is in danger and democratic institutions are being ruined. The influence of 'tanashai' (dictatorship) has been increasing on 'lokshahi' (democracy)," she added. Without naming any-

**The new assembly building will come up over 51 acres behind the new Mantralaya (secretariat) at a cost of around Rs 270 crore,**

one, Gandhi alleged that these elements want to suppress the voice of people.

"What do they want? They want people of the country, our youth, our tribal people, our women, our farmers, shopkeepers and small traders, jawans to keep their mouths shut," she said.

Two years from now the country will complete 75 years of Independence, the Congress president noted. "Father of the nation Mahatma Gandhi, former prime minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, G V Mavalankar (Speaker of the Constituent Assembly of India), Dr BR Ambedkar and our other forefathers would have never imagined that after 75 years of Independence, the coun-

try will face such a difficult situation and our Constitution and democracy will be in danger," she said.

Extending wishes on the foundation stone ceremony, she said, "Today is an important day and we all should take a pledge to protect the foundation of democracy."

"We should also take a pledge that as long as we are in power, we will take decisions keeping in mind the interests of people standing at the end of queue," Gandhi said.

"The legislature is the biggest pillar of our democracy. Parliament and legislative assembly are sacred temples of our democracy which ensure protection to our constitution. But it must be remembered that the Constitution will not be saved by buildings, rather it will be protected by emotions," she said.

"We have come a long distance in the last seven decades and successfully faced several challenges and got rid of

them. However, we are still far away from realizing the dreams of our forefathers," Gandhi said.

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi also attended the programme through video-conference from Delhi, officials said.

Rahul Gandhi hailed the Bhupesh Baghel government for launching schemes for farmers and tribals in his message read out by Agriculture Minister Ravindra Choubey.

Chief Minister Baghel, through Rajiv Gandhi Kisan Nyay Yojana and other schemes, has ensured that money reaches the hands of farmers, labourers and the poor, Rahul Gandhi said.

Besides Baghel, Chhattisgarh Assembly Speaker Charan Das Mahant and state ministers were present at the venue. The new assembly building will come up over 51 acres behind the new Mantralaya (secretariat) at a cost of around Rs 270 crore, officials said.

## Citing lifethreat, H'bad police intensify security of BJP MLA

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
HYDERABAD, 29 AUGUST

personnel responsible for his security and a few days ago an additional deputy commissioner of police visited his residence and replaced the weapons used by the personnel and also noted down the details of his neighbours. "You may kindly completely avoid moving on motorcycles and travel by the bullet proof (BP) car allotted. The government has provided this BP car only for your security which remains a prime concern to us," read the letter. However, the MLA is not ready to heed to the advice.

"My daily schedule involves going around the public on a bike for two hours. My constituency includes large stretches of slum area where four wheelers cannot enter. I cannot change my schedule. I cannot stop meeting the public because of the threat to my life because it is because of their blessings that I was elected as an MLA two times," said Singh.

"I want to ask the Telangana home minister, DGP, and CP Hyderabad about the threat against me. Is this a local organization, a local group or ISI, which terrorist organization is targeting me?" Singh is writing to the CM, state home minister and Union home minister in his letter. Special training has been organized for the police

## MEASURED MOVES



People walk at the Maharaja Ranjit Singh statue square after lockdown norms for weekends and public holidays in the state have been imposed, in Amritsar

AFP

## Govt mouts single voter list for LS, Assembly, local body polls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 29 AUGUST

voter lists. Several state election commissions use the draft voter list of the EC to formulate their own rolls. The draft EC roll is often divided into wards for local body elections. Now, the Centre is exploring the possibility of having a single voter list for Lok Sabha, Assembly and local body polls as this can help bring in uniformity and also save costs involved in an entire exercise getting repeated for making separate voter lists.

At present, the Election Commission prepares the electoral roll or voter list for Lok Sabha and assembly polls.

adopt the one prepared by the EC for assembly polls.

"The government is discussing whether there can be a single electoral roll for these three types of elections. Now, states have to be persuaded to adopt the central electoral roll (the one prepared by EC)," explained a senior functionary.

There are provisions in the Constitution that empower states to formulate their own laws to hold panchayat and municipal polls. States also have powers to either have their own voter lists or to

cise gets repeated for the same purpose.

"Money is also spent for the same exercise twice. One roll can be good for voters also and there would be no discrepancy in local body and assembly voter lists," he said.

Often discrepancies have been noticed when names of voters are missing in one of the lists. Earlier this month, the Prime Minister's Office organised a meeting on the issue where top officials of the Law Ministry and the EC gave their views on the present status and the future possibilities. Asked whether the proposed single electoral roll was linked to the idea of holding simultaneous elections, a government official said

the two are not linked as simultaneous polls typically refer to holding Lok Sabha and assembly polls together in the Indian context. The Election Commission, the Law Commission and the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Law and Personnel Ministries have supported the idea of a single voter list in the past also.

In a letter written to the government in November 1999, the Election Commission had said that separate rolls prepared by the EC and State ECs "not only create confusion among the electors because their names may be present in one roll but absent in the other, or vice versa, but also result in duplication of effort and expenditure."

## Tamang roots for Hill biz on alternate days

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
DARJEELING, 29 AUGUST

"We are seeing that there is a rise in the number of coronavirus cases in the hills, even though wise it is only 2.1 per cent. However, looking at the population and geographical location, one to three people are dying due to this everyday," Tamang said.

"The government, district administration and the GTA alone cannot control it. It is up to the people also to work towards saving all. It is my suggestion only to the business community and those associated with transport that they remain open on alternate days only. If feel that by closing 24 hours, the chain of Covid can be broken to some extent," Tamang said.



If the pandemic is an 'Act of God', how do we describe the mismanagement of the economy during 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20. Before the pandemic struck India?

**CONGRESS LEADER P CHIDAMBARAM**

TAKING A DIG AT NIRMALA SITHARAMAN OVER HER 'ACT OF GOD' REMARK ON THE ECONOMY

**The Sunday Statesman**  
NEW DELHI, 30 AUGUST 2020

**05**

**THUMBNAILS**



A worker cleans a guardrail at the century-old Connemara Public Library, in Chennai on Friday. **AFP**

**Probe in Battti death:** Madhya Pradesh Congress chief Kamal Nath has demanded a probe either by the CBI or a high-level committee into the "suspicious" death of tribal leader and Akhil Bharatiya Gondwana Party president Manmohan Shah Battti (57), an ex MLA from Amarwada, died due to a cardiac arrest on 2 August. **PTI**

**UP Rajya Sabha polls:** Nomination papers of BJP candidate Syed Zafar for the Rajya Sabha bypolls were filed in Lucknow on Saturday. According to party sources, Islam was not well and could not file his papers personally. Main proposer Suresh Khanna filed two sets of papers before returning officer B B Dubey in the absence of the candidate. **PTI**

**Raina's 'relative' killed:** A 58-year-old man said to be a relative of cricketer Suresh Raina died while four members of his family sustained injuries allegedly in an attack by robbers in Punjab's Pathankot district. The deceased has been identified as Ashok Kumar, a government contractor. His wife has been discharged. **PTI**

# Art 370 removal flouted spirit of federalism: PAC

NC's political affairs committee meets for first time after revocation of J&K's special status

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, 29 AUGUST



NC president Dr. Farooq Abdullah, former chief minister of J&K Omar Abdullah during the party PAC's meeting in Srinagar. **SNS**

The political affairs committee (PAC) of the National Conference (NC) on Saturday said that abrogation of Article 370 and splitting J&K into two Union Territories by the Centre on 5 August last year has violated the spirit of federalism and the sovereign pledges of the Union of India made to the people of Jammu and Kashmir from time to time.

The first meeting of the highest decision making body of the NC after 5 August last year when senior leaders of the opposition parties were put under detention was presided by the sitting MP and President of the NC, Dr. Farooq Abdullah. Former chief minister Omar Abdullah was also present in the meeting. Party leaders from Jammu and Ladakh participated in the meeting through video link.

"The unilateral, undemo-

cratic and unconstitutional measures undertaken by the Centre, and its impact on the ground level in Jammu and Kashmir was deliberated in the PAC meeting. On the occasion, the PAC members authorized the party President to widen the acceptance of Gupkar Declaration among all the sections in Kashmir, Jammu and Ladakh.

The participants applauded the efforts of Farooq Abdullah to bring different political voices on a single platform for

the restoration of J&K's honor, which was undemocratically, unilaterally and unethically rescinded on the 5 of August last year. Besides that the members of PAC also took strong exception of the succeeding measures undertaken by New Delhi following the annihilation of Articles 370, 35-A," said the statement issued at the end of the PAC meeting.

PAC members also expressed outrage over the decision undertaken on 5th of August last year, saying the

measures have violated the spirit of federalism and the sovereign pledges of Union of India to the people of Jammu and Kashmir made from time to time.

The members appreciated the peaceful response of people to unwholesome decisions undertaken by the centre. The PAC members vowed to stand behind the party president in his efforts to bring all political parties and other civil society groups on one platform to pitch for the restoration of what was constitutionally snatched from the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

The PAC members also

(HIDCO), the township's planning on sustainable and e-mobility including public bicycle sharing as green modes in addition to the existing modes, necessary infrastructure like charging stations, e-three-wheelers, norms to have 2 per cent of the car parking spaces reserved for electric vehicle charging points included in proposed amendment for by-laws, have found particular mention in the citation of IGBC.

The IGBC closely works with several state governments, central government, World Green Building Council and bilateral multilateral agencies in promoting green building concepts in the country. It offers a wide array of services including developing new green building rating programmes, certification services and green building training programmes.

Notably, in 2017, has appointed consultants before bidding for the rating while in September 2018, the township became India's first green-rated satellite city when it was awarded the Gold Certification for its Master Plan and Design.

The certification is valid for five years. Only four other cities, namely Dholera, Chennai, Amravati and Rajkot have been able to get the Platinum certificate.

According to official of state Housing Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited

curbing air pollution and water conservation in which we are putting efforts for enhancement," he added.

Mrs Shakuntala Ghosh, Chair, IGBC Kolkata chapter, said, "West Bengal has recently become one of the top five states in the country in terms of number of green building projects. As of today, the state has more than 400 registered green residential and commercial projects."

While Mr Sushil Mohanta, Co-chair, IGBC Kolkata chapter, added, "We request the state government to consider incentives such as rebate in property tax, and so on to green-rated existing residential and commercial building projects. The time is now ideal to include the existing buildings also as a part of the green building movement in West Bengal."

## BJP MP Sakshi put on 14-day home quarantine

**PTI**  
GIRIDIH, 29 AUGUST

BJP MP Sakshi Maharaj was forcibly home quarantined here on Saturday for 14-day for violating COVID norms, a senior district official said.

The MP from Uttar Pradesh had come to Giridih, over 200 km from Ranchi, to take part in a programme from Unnao via Dhanbad. Maharaj, who was returning to Dhanbad by road to take a train to Delhi, was intercepted by the district administration near Purnia police station and sent on quarantine at Shanti Bhawan,

**The action has been taken in accordance with a state government order of 14 days quarantine for people coming from outside the state, the DC said**

"He had not informed the ashram, where he had gone to take part in a programme, Deputy Commissioner Rahul Kumar Sinha said. The action has been taken in accordance with a state government order of 14 days quarantine for people coming from outside the state, the DC said.

state government about his visit and return of the Uttar Pradesh politician without advance information, the administration sealed borders of the district and put barricades. A team headed by Sub Divisional Magistrate, which was following him stopped the MP at a barricade and sent him on 14 days quarantine at Shanti Bhawan, the DC said.

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Odisha, the BJP leader said the Odisha state govt also wants the exam to be conducted and are also providing transport and accommodation facilities to students appearing for the exams. "Mamata ji, you should not do politics over this. People died due to Covid-19 pandemic and Mamata," he said.

Miss Banerjee on Friday said that the state government was weighing the pros and cons of holding final-year college and university exams before Durga Puja in October. She also criticised the Centre over its decision to conduct JEE and NEET exams in September and said the Central government's 'adamant approach' will add to the Covid-19 woes.

They are also providing facilities to students for exam.

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## JEE-NEET exams: BJP slams WB CM for criticising Centre

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE**

KOLKATA, 29 AUGUST

BJP's national secretary and West Bengal observer Kailash Vijayvargiya today slammed the chief minister Mamata Banerjee for criticising the Union Government's decision to hold the JEE and NEET exams in September.

The senior BJP leader asked Miss Banerjee not to politicise the exam issue and said 90 per cent of the students have downloaded forms for the upcoming

exams.

He further alleged that people in West Bengal have lost their lives due to Covid-19 pandemic and the chief minister. He also said that if the BJP gains the victory in the upcoming Assembly poll then it will order a high-level probe into the murder of several BJP workers.

Backing the Centre's decision over JEE-NEET row, he said people knew that the government has taken the decision for the betterment of the students' careers. Citing the example of

Odisha, the BJP leader said the Odisha state govt also wants the exam to be conducted and are also providing transport and accommodation facilities to students appearing for the exams. "Mamata ji, you should not do politics over this. People died due to Covid-19 pandemic and Mamata," he said.

Miss Banerjee on Friday said that the state government was weighing the pros and cons of holding final-year college and university exams before Durga Puja in October. She also criticised the Centre over its decision to conduct JEE and NEET exams in September and said the Central government's 'adamant approach' will add to the Covid-19 woes.

They are also providing facilities to students for exam.

## J&K: Soldier martyred, 3 militants killed in encounter

JAMMU, 29 AUGUST

An Indian Army soldier from Muzaffarnagar in Uttar Pradesh, Prashant Sharma, was martyred and three unidentified terrorists gunned down on Saturday during an encounter in the Zadpora area of south Kashmir's Pulwama district.

The 23-years old soldier

## The 23-years old soldier belonging to the Khanapur village of UP was critically injured during the encounter and succumbed in hospital

belonging to the Khanapur village of UP was critically injured during the encounter and succumbed in hospital, said Defence Spokesman Colonel Rajesh Kalia. A huge cache of arms and ammunition, including one AK rifle and two pistols, have been recovered by the security forces from the killed terrorists. The identities of the slain terrorists are yet to be ascertained. Acting on a tip-off, the J&K Police, 50 RR of the Army and CRPF launched a cordon and search operation in the village past-midnight.

As the joint team of security forces cordoned the suspected spot, hiding terrorists opened fire at them and this led to an encounter. With this, a total of seven terrorists have been neutralised by security forces in the last 24 hours. So far, 153 terrorists have been killed in the state this year.

## PM wants introduction of farm education at middle school level

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**

NEW DELHI, 29 AUGUST



central agricultural universities in the country, compared to just one university six years ago. Besides this, three more national institutions -- IARI Jharkhand, IARI Assam and Mahatma Gandhi Institute for Integrated Farming in Motihari, Bihar -- are being established.

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

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

He sought the cooperation of the universities in developing the ecosystem to streamline the flow of knowledge and expertise from campus to agriculture fields.

On use of modern technology in tackling farm sector challenges, Modi cited the recent locust attack and said

the government worked on war footing to control the spread of the attack and to reduce the damage.

He mentioned that dozens of control rooms were set up in several cities, arrangements were made to alert farmers in advance, and drones were supplied for spraying pesticides. Besides, dozens of modern spray machines used to kill locusts, were procured and provided to farmers. Asserting that the farm sector has a major role to play in making India 'Aatmanirbhar' (self-reliant), Modi said, "When I talk about aatmanirbhar in agriculture, it is not limited to foodgrains but the self-reliance of a village/rural economy."

Self-reliance in agriculture aims at making farmers both producer as well as entrepreneur. The growth of farmers and overall farm sector will lead to creation of jobs at village level, he said. To further boost the farm sector and double the income of farmers, Modi said the government is taking several historical reforms in the sector.

## SPREADING CONCERN



Members of the transgender community perform a peacock dance during an awareness raising campaign against the spread of Covid-19, at a residential area in Chennai on Saturday. **AFP**

**Bishiyara**  
Sector 37C, Gurugram

LICENCE NO. : 15 of 2018 dated 13.02.2018  
BUILDING PLAN MEMO NO.: ZP-1238/AD(RA)/2018/28705 dated 08 Oct 2018  
HARERA REG. NO.: RC/REP/HARERA/GGM/2018/26 dated 28.11.2018

### Aashiyara Affordable Group Housing Project E-Draw Result

List of application numbers of successful applicants in the E-Draw of flats in Aashiyara Affordable Group Housing Project - Sector 37C, Gurugram, held on 28/08/2020, Friday at Corus Banquet, 339/1/2, Mehrauli Road, Opp. SBI Bank, Sector 14, Gurugram-122001, Haryana.

#### 2 BHK Type A (578.55 Sq. Ft. / 53.749 Sq. Mtr.)

2894 2931 2952 3064 3075 3077

#### 2 BHK Type B (548.92 Sq. Ft. / 50.996 Sq. Mtr.)

2803 2804 2807 2808 2809 2813 2815 2818 2819 2820 2821 2822 2823 2838 2839 2841 2842 2843 2882  
2883 2884 2885 2886 2887 2888 2889 2890 2892 2893 2895 2896 2899 2901 2902 2903 2905 2906 2907  
2909 2914 2915 2916 2917 2918 2919 2920 2921 2924 2925 2926 2929 2932 2933 2938 2939 2943 2945  
2947 2948 2951 2956 2961 2962 2964 2965 2967 2969 2972 2973 2990 2991 2995 2997 2998 2999 3000  
3003 3007 3008 3009 3015 3016 3026 3027 3031 3032 3033 3034 3035 3036 3037 3038 3039 3051 3052  
3053 3054 3063 3066 3068 3070 3071 3073 3083 3086 3089 3138 3139 3140 3141 3142 3148 3152  
3313 3351

#### Disclaimer

The E-Draw of flats of Aashiyara was held under the supervision of DGTCP & D.C officials as per the guidelines laid down in Affordable Group Housing Policy.

Confirmed allotment list is in ascending order.

For more details, please visit [www.aashiyara.com](http://www.aashiyara.com), where the list of successful applicants is available.

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\*1 Sq. Mtr = 10.764 Sq. Ft



## Rebuffing China

That China's acceptance of the international order is restricted to areas where its interests lie ought to have been clear to the world when it refused in 2016 to accept a ruling of the Permanent Court of Arbitration set up under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. China is a permanent member of the UN Security Council and a signatory to the convention, yet it brazenly refused even to join the arbitration sought by the Philippines to contest Beijing's claims in the South China Sea. Despite the tribunal endorsing its position, Philippines could not do much in the matter, as even neighbours that have similar grievances with China were prepared to offer little more than perfunctory support. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) did try to initiate a dialogue, but a robust denunciation of China's defiance of international law was not forthcoming. The status quo subsists and even the Philippines President, Rodrigo Duterte, who assumed office the same year as the ruling, had seemed unwilling to pursue the matter. But now things might be changing. Taking the lead from the United States, Philippines has announced it will scrap contracts with Chinese firms involved in land reclamation projects in the South China Sea. The US last Wednesday banned 24 Chinese companies, including subsidiaries of one building an airport south of Manila, from buying American products and technology because they were helping China's military to build artificial islands in the South China Sea. The Chinese have added more than 3,000 acres to disputed shoals and reefs in the sea and continues to do so despite its claim having been rejected by the Court of Arbitration at the Hague. Now, Philippines Foreign Minister Teodoro Locsin has said, "If I find that any of those companies are doing business with us, then I would strongly recommend terminating the relationship with that company." While Chinese belligerence in the South China Sea has led to disputes with other countries including Vietnam and Brunei, action by the Philippines, if actually taken, will be notable in the Southeast Asian context because nations in the region have generally blinked under China's glare.

Another country that has now felt the intensity of the dragon's glare is Norway where the visiting Chinese Foreign Minister testily told his hosts this week that any attempt to award the Nobel Peace Prize to protesters in Hong Kong would be firmly resisted and could rupture bilateral ties. Although the Prize is not decided by the Norwegian government, China clearly believes its warning will serve the purpose. The diplomatic relationship between the two countries was frozen from 2010 to 2016 after the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to prominent Chinese dissident and human rights activist, Liu Xiaobo. Whether protesters qualify for a Peace Prize or not is for the Nobel committee to decide. But if the decision is influenced in any manner by China's threat, it will be unfortunate.

## Mankad memories

A recent revival of the old but undying controversy around cricket's Mankad dismissals has had a trio of Indians – Sunil Gavaskar, Dinesh Karthik and Ravichandran Ashwin – siding with an illustrious predecessor in a strikingly strong attempt at presenting the matter from a perspective different from the usual one, customarily partial to the non-striker who is viewed as a victim. Resenting the pejorative connotation that the use of the name of the stalwart of yesteryear in the way the ousters pan out implies, the generations-apart Indians have suggested that those who lose their wickets backing up too far had better have their exits recorded as having been Browned because the eponymous Australian whom Vinoo Mankad had given the bum's rush was in reality extracting an unfair advantage. Spirit-of-cricket sermons inveighing against the alert bowler are so much waffle when the non-striker sacrifices scruples for a competitive edge, and if anyone emerges unsullied out of the affair it is the man with the ball, Vinoo Mankad or Ashwin. The bowler has actually taken the trouble to look up the nitty-gritty of the law to decide what he will do if someone tries to make a fool of him. And Mankad was an authentic professional, considered a pioneer in that respect in the history of Indian cricket. Mankad, it is said, warned Bill Brown against taking liberties in a game ahead of the Test match on India's 1947-8 tour of Australia, where feelings ran high when the home boy chose to be cavalier and the Indian all-rounder, uncompromising.

Sir Don Bradman saw nothing wrong in what Mankad had done but the high moral ground was there to be claimed by anyone who felt inclined to mount the old soapbox. The tradition having endured, Ricky Ponting some time ago deemed it necessary – maybe he was at a loose end – to say that he wanted to advise Ashwin on the inadvisability of Mankad dismissals, which was a reference to what had befallen Jos Buttler in the Indian Premier League previously. Ashwin, in his riposte, has recommended retribution for the sly practice of stealing space whilst pretending to back up one's batting partner at the other end. India no longer curl up like carbon paper in the face of the White Man's quasi-moral criticism. Turning the other cheek is no longer an option. The return wallop is, and India do have the cerebral wherewithal to hit back when they feel put upon. New India is not apologetic. No colonial hangover there. And if Gavaskar preceded today's stars by years, his position in cricketing jurisprudence, especially when it comes to an Indian interpretation of anything, will have to be looked upon as pre-eminent, given that India learnt to fight when the Mumbaikar used to be the combative face of the nation out there in the middle. Mankad would have felt proud of the triad.

# A New Policy

The Four Year Undergraduate Programme, by introducing multiple exit points, may institutionalise drop-outs. Recent rise in enrollment in colleges has already created a tremendous pressure on the quality of teaching-learning process. With an additional year there will be difficulty in accommodating extra numbers for many institutions

When the first National Education Policy came into effect in 1968, based on the recommendations of the Kothari Commission (1964-66), it called for a radical restructuring of education. However, in its attempt to be comprehensive it generated considerable confusion. It was assumed that in 1947, there were two major streams of thought and policy-framework that could have influenced education. The first was Gandhian in which the dismantling of colonial education was of utmost importance.

During the struggle for Independence, the Mahatma not merely denounced the education system introduced by the British; he started a parallel system. The other was Nehru's "imitation model". He felt it was right to retain the colonial system and use it for modernisation. However, he failed to generate a movement for mass education through which he could have undermined the domination of the colonial elite.

It is generally believed that though education has expanded as an instrument of upward social mobility, yet there is something seriously wrong with the system. The more common refrain is that of stagnation and the gap between educational expansion and the needs of society. The theoretical content of education has been overloaded with the result that everyone is bewildered about the real purpose.

We are told that the objective of education is to impart reading and writing skills, and to train the analytical faculties of a child; to equip him mentally so that he can make independent judgements about problems and issues; to learn the techniques of sophisticated analysis; to prepare the youth to be strong in a world of tough competition; to be a good citizen; to preserve and enrich the Indian tradition; to absorb the challenges of the modern world; to contribute to economic development; to generate a sense of social commitment to imbibe values which the education system thinks worth pursuing, and to help the country find a respectable place on the world map.

Education can be work-oriented in two aspects. When a student is taught the skill necessary for a certain profession, his education is in a certain sense job oriented. But education can be work-oriented in a distinctly different sense. One can feel that our education, particularly higher education, is marked by abstractions, that it ignores training of the senses to a greater extent than is good for the all-round development of the personality, and further, that it does not take enough care to acquaint students with concrete social problems. Work education may be one of the methods to address these deficiencies. This, however, is different from training a student for a job. Here the aim is to correct excessive one-sidedness in general education. In fact, work education and job-oriented training are two different disciplines. Our education policy risks being miscarried unless this is kept clearly in view.

In India, there is a rush for higher education. By diverting students from general education



to the vocational during school years, the new education policy can ensure general welfare. It can benefit both the vocation and higher education. It is not the proper function of universities to prepare students for jobs. Those who graduate with medicine and engineering may indeed be eligible for jobs corresponding to their expertise. A Master's degree may carry some weight in teaching and research. For most other jobs, there is no rational ground for preference to a university degree holder. This should be the implication of delinking jobs from degrees.

The "10+2+3" system was intended to change the system handed down unthinkingly since the days of Macaulay. The objective was two-fold: to give students a broad-based education up to class X and to vocationalise education after this stage in order to meet the needs of our overcrowded universities so that what passes as higher education may become a bit more farcical. In theory, the scheme is unexceptionable and deserves sympathy as the first genuine attempt to reform the education system. In practice, unfortunately, what was attempted was ill-conceived when account is taken of the severe limitations of facilities available and the deep-rooted socio-economic values that pervade our society.

Back in 1977, Morarji Desai told the Education Conference: "I do not know how it (10+2+3) is going to give any benefit. It has only disturbed the whole thing for the worse. This kind of change in education is not change. It only misguides the people into believing that we are making something better."

The then Union Education Minister, PC Chunder's earlier criticism of the system made people think that it would be given short shrift. The state education ministers too found much good in it. And after having done the traditional duty of condemning the system, the

powers-hat-be decided to continue with it. Thus, it was intended to be a uniform system all over the country.

And there lies the rub. No system, not even one imported from utopia can equally suit all parts of a country with infinite diversities. The infamous 42nd Amendment by making education a concurrent list subject attempted to put education in a straitjacket. Authoritarians everywhere seek the brainwashing of

the younger generation through education of their choice. Moreover, we were left to believe that there was no real change in the switch over – "10+2" was only a change of nomenclature from the old Matriculation and Intermediate and "+3" was the old BA lengthened by a year. Such a sacrifice of years was to be made to usher in a "radical" reform. It is doubtful

to say that the Four Year Undergraduate Programme (FYUP) format proposed in the new education policy would be at once make a great change. It seems that our educational policymakers have reached a dead end - they have condemned the old system many times and they have not shown any remarkable inventiveness in devising a novel system. The new system would come not as a brand-new thing cut and dried and dropped from heaven; the format was in fact tried and scrapped in 2014, following a spat between Delhi University and the UGC.

Notwithstanding DU's retreat to the traditional three-year programme from the ambitious FYUP, the UGC again has goofed up. However, replacement with multiple exit options is suggested. Students will have to spend an extra year which would certainly inflate the cost of the entire course and as such students from weaker sections would face difficulties in pursuing the new programme and get marginalised.

The biggest structural change called the FYUP will have

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The shocker is that with all these drawbacks, the proposed scheme has to be enacted at public expense, the executors being the custodians of public good. A new education policy is likely to be more effective if it is based on actual recognition of merit.

implications ranging from the financial to the infrastructural, on the public character of the university as also on higher education. The essential feature of the new format will be multiple exit points where students will have the option of leaving after 2 years with a diploma, after 3 years with a Bachelors' degree and after 4 years with an honours degree. By introducing multiple exit points, it is feared, drop-outs will be institutionalised. Recent rise in enrollment in colleges has already created a tremendous pressure on the quality of teaching-learning process. With an additional year there will be difficulty in accommodating extra numbers for many institutions.

It is also being argued that by adopting FYUP, our higher education system is aping the American system of majors and minors without preparing a climate for it. In America, two-year courses are offered by community colleges while undergraduate colleges with four-year programmes are separate. It is feared that the move is aimed at fulfilling some vested interests such as pushing the Foreign Educational Institutions (Regulation of Entry and Operations) Bill, which is pending before the Parliament. Presently, foreign universities must collaborate with Indian partners to set up shop in India.

Some time ago, there were reports as to how the government, unable to pass the bill in Rajya Sabha was looking for "backdoor entries" for these universities. The report of the National Knowledge Commission with its recommendations made over a period of three years (2007-09), points at a scenario where educational institutions should ultimately transform into self-generating entities. The proposed format will make it easier for foreign universities to become stakeholders in Indian educational institutions.

The new format may facilitate smooth transition of Indian students to graduate schools in the US without the requirement of an additional bridging year to conform to the US system. Moreover, it is the United States which pioneered the publicly-funded school education system in the West and did a lot to curb illiteracy among the masses. Also, the fact remains that American students are more innovative than those of other countries, and when they become part of the university system, they, in fact, need to get an extra year for their resources to be exploited. This is a luxury that only a developed country can afford.

As for European Union countries, in the wake of the Bologna Accord, they decided to award two types of bachelors' degrees – one through the university and the other through higher polytechnics/professional colleges. They require the same number of years to complete the degree as in our country. So, does it make sense to emulate the US format?

The shocker is that with all these drawbacks, the proposed scheme has to be enacted at public expense, the executors being the custodians of public good. A new education policy is likely to be more effective if it is based on actual recognition of merit.

A MEMBER OF THE ANN ASIA NEWS NETWORK

ASIAN VOICES

Epidemic politics

Rev. Jun Kwang-hoon and his Sarang Jeil Church are largely responsible for the resurgence of Covid-19. This is undeniable. They floated social distancing instructions, obstructed contact tracing and refused testing. They deserve condemnation. But the government and the Democratic Party of Korea cannot be immune to responsibility for their failure to contain the virus. New infections are increasing rapidly and throughout the country. Now is the time for the entire nation to unite to beat the epidemic. And yet the party and the government are busy blaming the conservative main opposition party. The United Future Party has little to do with a massive anti-government rally in Gwanghwamun Square in central Seoul on August 15. It distanced itself from Jun early on. But the ruling party is ignoring this, and trying hard to link the UFP to the pastor. Ruling party Floor Leader Kim Tae-yeon said the UFP should stop inciting division of public opinion and strongly recommend that rally participants get tested for the virus. Former lawmaker Kim Booyuk said some far rightists are spreading the coronavirus under the cover of religion to sabotage the Moon government's fight against the epidemic. Rep. Lee Won-wook, who is running for party leader, argued that Kim Chong-in, the acting UFP leader, should be "dragged down (from his position) for aiding and abetting the coronavirus terrorist." Lee also insulted the judge who approved the rally. He proposed a bill to restrict judges' right to rule on rallies, and named his bill after the judge. As a matter of fact, a large portion of recent cases are unrelated to the church or the rally. Nevertheless, the ruling party and the government focus on the church and the Gwanghwamun rally. According to

**H The Korea Herald**  
the Korea Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, a total of 3,039 new infections were reported nationwide for two weeks from Aug. 11 to 24. Of them, 875 (28.7 percent) were linked to the church, and 176 (5.7 percent) to the Gwanghwamun rally.

Around the same time in the vicinity of Bosingak Pavilion in nearby Jongno, about 2,000 members of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions effectively rallied under the pretext of a "press conference." Seoul City Hall had refused permission for a demonstration, but they gathered anyway, saying it was a press conference. Despite coming down hard on conservative groups, the ruling party and the government say little about the KCTU gathering. Police and health authorities raided pastors' residences and churches that participated in the Gwanghwamun rally but levied no administrative sanctions on the labor event. They argued that it was not a rally but a press conference. This reasoning is less than convincing. About a week after the de facto rally, where attendees shouted slogans and sang to dance routines, a participant tested positive at a hospital in Pyeongtaek, Gyeonggi Province. 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Govt will work tirelessly to make India one of the easiest countries to invest and create wealth

AMITABH KANT  
NITI AAYOG CEO

## THUMBNAILS

**Sebi measures:** The Securities and Exchange Board of India has said measures to deal with market volatility will be in place till 24 September after reviewing the coronavirus pandemic related situation. In the wake of the pandemic, the capital markets watchdog, in March, came out with various measures, including revision of market wide position limit, to ensure orderly trading and settlement to contain high market volatility.

PTI

**ITC's merger plan:** Diversified business entity ITC said it is considering merger of its three wholly-owned subsidiaries - Sunrise Foods, Hobbits International Foods and Sunrise Sheetgrah ~ with itself. A board meeting of the company has been convened for this on 4 September 2020, ITC informed in a regulatory filing. On 27 July, ITC had announced to acquire spices manufacturer Sunrise Foods in an all-cash deal valued at Rs 2,150 crore.

PTI

**Wockhardt profit:** Drug firm Wockhardt on Saturday reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 759.75 crore for June quarter, mainly on account of exceptional items in connection with the transfer of a business comprising 62 products and Baddi facility to Dr Reddy's Laboratories. The company had posted a net loss of Rs 36.88 crore for April-June 2019-20. Wockhardt said in a filing to BSE. Total income stood at Rs 606.22 crore in the quarter under review. It was Rs 733.66 crore in the year-ago period, the filing added.

PTI

**Bank credit growth:** Bank credit grew by 5.52 per cent to Rs 102.19 lakh crore and deposits increased 11.04 per cent to Rs 140.80 lakh crore in the fortnight ended 14 August, according to RBI data. In the year-ago period, bank credit stood at Rs 96.84 lakh crore and deposit at Rs 126.84 lakh crore, respectively. In the previous fortnight ended 31 July 2019, bank credit grew 5.51 per cent while deposits witnessed a growth of 11.11 per cent.

PTI

## Hyundai hopes to register sales growth in August

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 29 AUGUST

Healthy off-take in the up-country market segment along with robust response for new offerings has reinforced India's image as one of the most attractive markets for automobile major Hyundai. Accordingly, the company expects to cross the year-on-year domestic threshold in August, while maintaining strong sequential growth momentum.

HML's director sales and marketing Tarun Garg cited the healthy response for SUV Creta along with initiatives like car subscription and "Click-to-Buy" as trigger for growth. "We are hopeful that sales

momentum will continue in August and even record growth on sequential and year-on-year basis. However, it must be noted that sales during July to September last year was not very healthy," Garg said.

"There has been a good response to new offerings, plus, there were two major festivals this month. The up-country markets like Punjab, Jharkhand, Haryana and MP have performed much better than urban centres. This may be due to lower number of cases and growth in crop remuneration."

Besides, he pointed out that Covid triggered shift from public transport to personal mobility options and the low automobile ownership in India

as the other major reasons for healthy sales pick-up. Last month, the auto major's domestic sales volume reached 98 per cent of July 2019 level. The company's domestic sales accounted for 38,200 units, while it exported another 3,100 units.

Overall, the auto major reported cumulative sales of 41,300 units during July 2020.

Recently, the company launched "Intelligent Manual Transmission, Elantra diesel BS6, Venue iMT, New Verna, 2020 Tucson". The SUV Creta's second generation was launched in March. Even as sales' prospect seems promising, Garg cautioned against an element of uncertainty surrounding the pandemic's progression.

The country's beer market has been strengthening on account of higher disposable income, rising preference for low-alcohol beverage and gradual social acceptance, the report said, adding that these factors will propel "huge growth in the coming years".

Besides, UBL, a market leader in the segment, also expects the export of beer to grow with support from the government.

United Breweries Ltd (UBL), which owns the popular Kingfisher brand of beer, is expecting further acquisitions and entry of new players in the Indian beer market, despite disruptions due to Covid-19 and higher taxes by some states, the company said in its annual report.

The country's beer market has been strengthening on account of higher disposable income, rising preference for low-alcohol beverage and gradual social acceptance, the report said, adding that these factors will propel "huge growth in the coming years".

Besides, UBL, a market leader in the segment, also expects the export of beer to grow with support from the government.

According to UBL, the industry may witness further acquisitions, entry of new players and brands, and tie-ups which will drive this market further towards growth.

Indian market, UBL said that per capita beer consumption here is still very low compared to other countries in the Asia Pacific region and therefore the market could witness "huge growth in the coming years".

This would be led by factors such as the shift from hard liquor to beer consumption by consumers in India, increase in disposable income, change in societal perspective and others, it added.

Attitude towards alcohol consumption is evolving par-

## 'Trade restrictive steps must be temporary and transparent'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 29 AUGUST

According to the joint statement, the ministers recognised the importance of facilitating essential movement of people across borders, without undermining each country's efforts to prevent the spread of the virus, to stabilise the trade and investment.

The ministers agreed that any trade restrictive emergency measures put in place to address the impact of Covid-19 must be targeted, proportionate, temporary, consistent with WTO (World Trade Organisation) rules and do not create unnecessary barriers to trade or disruption of global and regional supply chains," it said.

It added that the participating countries exchanged views on how to accelerate economic growth, maintain supply chains and market stability, and strengthen the economic resilience of the EAS region post Covid-19 pandemic.

They also discussed the importance of harnessing the opportunities of digital economy.

already declassified provisions in the Companies Act, 2013 through an ordinance.

The provisions basically declassified violations involving minor technical and procedural defaults, including shortcoming in CSR reporting, inadequacies in board report, filing defaults and delay in holding annual general meeting.

Besides, majority of the compoundable offences sections would be shifted to internal adjudication mechanism.

In March, the Union Cabinet approved 72 changes to the Companies law with focus on decriminalisation of various provisions and permitting direct overseas listing of Indian corporates.

The changes are also being done to de-clog criminal courts and the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT).

The government has

## Capex by CPSEs can boost GDP by 2-3%: PESB chairman

He also suggested numerous steps to address talent shortage in Central public sector enterprises

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 29 AUGUST

As my last tweet from PESB, I exhort all CPSE execs to think strategic, synergise talent & resources amongst themselves. With Rs 25.43 LCr as FY19 turnover, Rs 11.8 LCr as Net worth, additional leveraging can fund CAPEX & add 2-3% to GDP. Pl rise to the occasion. Best wishes

RAJIV KUMAR  
CHAIRMAN, PESB

Central public sector enterprises, which have a combined net worth of close to Rs 12 lakh crore, can boost India's GDP by 2-3 per cent by leveraging funds and stepping up capital expenditure, Public Enterprises Selection Board (PESB) chairman Rajiv Kumar has said.

He also exhorted public sector firms to "rise to the occasion" and play their part in building an Atmanirbhar Bharat. Besides, with an aim to address the talent shortage and promote transparency in board-level appointments of Central public sector enterprises (CPSEs), the PESB chairman has suggested numerous measures, including creating wider talent pool, allowing lateral entry for candidates and offering level-playing field.

For the last 5-6 years, CPSEs have been major investors in the economy as the private sector has been shying away from

making fresh investment due to various reasons.

Pinning hopes on public sector undertakings, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman earlier this month asked large CPSEs to achieve by next month 50 per cent of their planned capital expenditure target for FY21 to support economic growth in the backdrop of challenges posed by Covid-19.

While mentioning the significant role of CPSEs in giving a push to the growth of the Indian economy, the finance minister encouraged the CPSEs to perform better to achieve

targets and to ensure the capital outlay provided to them for the financial year 2020-21 is spent properly and within time. In order to streamline the selection process in central PSUs, the PESB in its draft note on reforms also suggested avoiding repetitive interviews by clubbing the post schedule-wise or cognate group-wise.

For instance, it said there should be standardised job description for identical posts of chairman/CMD/MD, director (HR/personnel), director (finance), director (marketing) and director (technical). The draft reforms suggest same

qualification and experience for appointments for identical posts across CPSEs. In view of clubbing of posts, encouraging applications from all sectors, it is proposed to increase the minimum number of slots for short-listed candidates from 12 to 16, it said.

As a result, a wide talent pool gets to participate from all categories including internal and external in the selection process. The draft note also suggested advertisements to be issued for vacancies falling during 1 July to 30 June, one year prior to the date of vacancies.

"Uniform mandatory qualification and experience will lead to more competition, transparency and bring about parity," said a note on which the PESB has invited comments from the stakeholders by 30 September 2020.

PESB carries out board-level selection for about 250 CPSEs which play a vital role in the growth of Indian economy.

It is to be noted that CPSEs

annual gross turnover is around Rs 25.5 lakh crore, while net worth is pegged at Rs 11.8 lakh crore. They contributed about Rs 3.68 lakh crore to government exchequer in financial year 2018-19.

Balance sheet of PSUs permits additional leverage of around Rs 25 lakh crore on capex in the next four years. This is about one-fourth of the National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) of Rs 111 lakh crore.

"As my last tweet from PESB, I exhort all CPSE execs to think strategic, synergise talent & resources amongst themselves. With Rs 25.43 LCr as FY19 turnover, Rs 11.8 LCr as Net worth, additional leveraging can fund CAPEX & add 2-3% to GDP. Pl rise to the occasion. Best wishes," Kumar said in a tweet.

Rajiv Kumar, known for bold and systemic reforms, has brought in reforms in the PSU appointment process in his brief stint of just about four months as PESB chairman. He is all set to join as the Election Commissioner.

## Ease of doing biz: Govt sets out to decriminalise GST laws

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 29 AUGUST

reviewed to decriminalise offences and allow wider use of compounding provision.

The aim is to improve business sentiments and reduce litigation and rising burden on courts.

The proposed changes have already been welcomed by the industry which feels any move towards ease of doing business and decriminalising offences would prevent harassment at the hands of authorities.

The existing GST laws allow liberal use of arrest provisions where an individual can be put behind bars merely on reasons to believe that he or she must have escaped tax liability before an investigation on the issue could be concluded.

A final proposal will then be moved to the Cabinet.

The Directorate General of Goods and Services Tax (DGST) has already written to the industry chambers to get inputs on the proposed changes.

In its communication to the industry, the DGST stated that GST laws were being

ticularly among youth, working women and other urban population who are gaining an appetite for beer as social drinking has become a more adaptable lifestyle in metros and tier-2 cities," it said.

Over 30 percent of the total population in India comprises youth, and beer consumption is increasingly becoming part of their social interactions.

Beer is gradually becoming a perfect after-work companion for corporate India as well,

said UBL, in which Heineken has a majority stake.

"Except for the current financial year where sales and revenue may be adversely impacted due to the after-effect of this force majeure circumstance, the opportunities for beer growth would stay northbound," it said.

Moreover, online delivery of liquor, permitted in some states after the market opened after lockdown, has augmented easy availability of beer, the report said. "While excise policies across states do not allow online supply or delivery of alcohol, the Covid pandemic has given the alcohol industry an opportunity to pursue home delivery and online sales which are likely to augment easy availability of beer, it said.

According to UBL, the industry may witness further acquisitions, entry of new players and brands, and tie-ups which will drive this market further towards growth.

"It is expected that the demand for premium beer will continue to rise in the future with an increase in personal disposable income and higher living standards," it said.

## Decline in telephone subscriber base

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 29 AUGUST

Telecom consumer base in the country dipped to around 116.36 crore in May, but service providers were able to narrow the loss of subscriber base to 57.6 lakh as compared to the previous month, according to data released by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India.

The telecom subscriber base had declined by 85.3 lakh in April, when the country was under complete lockdown, to 116.94 crore.

The number of telephone subscribers in India decreased from 1,169.44 million at the end of April 2020 to 1,163.67 million at the end of May 2020, thereby showing a monthly

### RELIANCE JIO, BSNL GAIN

» Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea lost around 47 lakh mobile customers each in May.

» Reliance Jio continued to grow its subscriber base with a net addition of over 36 lakh new connections in May.

decline rate of 0.49 per cent," the Trai subscription report for May said.

Major loss in subscriber base was recorded in the mobile telephony segment, with Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea losing around 47 lakh mobile customers each in

May. The total wireless customer base of Airtel and Vodafone Idea dipped to 31.7 crore and 30.9 crore, respectively. Reliance Jio continued to grow its subscriber base with a net addition of over 36 lakh new connections and led the market with a total subscriber base of 39.2 crore. State-owned BSNL also added over 2 lakh new mobile subscribers, taking its total wireless customer base to 11.9 crore.

Urban centres recorded a decline of 92.3 lakh mobile subscribers, while the customer base in rural areas

increased by 36.2 lakh, according to the report.

The overall mobile subscriber base dipped to 114.39 crore during the reported month.

The landline user base in the country declined by 1.5 lakh to 1.97 crore at the end of May.

BSNL, which leads the market, continued to record a decline in fixedline customer base, while the new entrant Reliance Jio was the only player to have acquired new subscribers in the segment during May.

BSNL lost 1.34 lakh wireless customers, while Reliance Jio gained 90,000 new subscribers.

The urban teledensity reached 137.81 per cent, while

rural teledensity stood at 59.23 per cent in May.

Despite dip in overall subscriber, broadband customer base in the country grew 1.13 per cent to 68.3 crore in May from 67.6 crore in April.

Wireless broadband connections dominated the segment with 66.37 crore connections, while wired connections accounted for 1.93 crore customers.

Out of the total 344 broadband service providers, top five operators accounted for 98.93 per cent market share.

Reliance Jio led the broadband market in the country with 39.37 crore connections, Bharti Airtel 14.59 crore, Vodafone Idea 11.3 crore, BSNL 2.2 crore and Atria Convergence 16.4 lakh subscribers.

## Forex reserves up by \$ 2.296 billion

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI, 29 AUGUST

The country's foreign exchange reserves rose by \$2.296 billion to reach \$537.548 billion in the week to 21 August, RBI data showed. In the previous week ended 14 August, the reserves had declined by \$2.939 billion to \$535.252 billion.

The forex kitty had increased by \$3.623 billion to reach a record high of \$538.191 billion in the week ended 7 August.

In the reporting week, the increase in reserves was mainly due to a jump in foreign currency assets (FCAs), a major component of the overall reserves.

FCAs rose by \$2.618 billion



*With transport system partly operational why are you bent on jeopardising the life of the students...*

STATE EDUCATION MINISTER PARTHA CHATTERJEE  
SLAMMING THE CENTRE FOR TRYING TO HOLD JEE AND NEET IN THE MIDST OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The Sunday Statesman  
NEW DELHI, 30 AUGUST 2020

09

# Fourteen deaths, 3252 new Covid cases in Odisha

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
BHUBANESWAR, 29 AUGUST

Odisha on Saturday witnessed the worst ever single day fatality of 14 COVID-19 infection deaths, pushing the state's tally death toll to 470 while overall COVID case-load got closer to the one lakh-mark with 3,252 positive cases in the past 24 hours.

Of the 14 fatalities reported today, Balasore, Khurda, Malkangiri, Cuttack and Jagatsinghpur reported 2 deaths each followed by Bargarh, Jajpur, Puri and Sundargarh (one each).

Odisha's fatality rate has grown by 32% in the past fortnight with the tally jumping from 324 to 470 in the past 15 days.

It is the worst ever single day spike in Khordha district under the revenue jurisdiction of which the State capital-Bhubaneswar comes under.

The fresh cases, 1,987 were detected in quarantine centres, while 1,265 people

**Khurda district with 762 infections headed Saturday's tally followed by Rayagada (450), Cuttack (323), Ganjam (169), Bargarh (146), Puri (135), Mayurbhanj (123) and Nayagarh (120).**

Despite the recent spurt in the death toll, the state continues to stay on the bottom spots of the country's fatality graph with 0.47% rate while the case fatality rate in the country currently stands at 1.96 per cent.

The COVID count in Odisha has risen to 97,920.

While the contagion's graph is going from bad to worse in Khurda district with its tally

breaching 15,000-mark, the virus spread in Rayagada, Cuttack, Sundargarh and Mayurbhanj districts has worsened COVID Managers here.

Ganjam district which was the worst hit has been witnessing a downward curve with fewer cases.

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It is the worst ever single day spike in Khordha district under the revenue jurisdiction of which the State capital-Bhubaneswar comes under.

The fresh cases, 1,987 were detected in quarantine centres, while 1,265 people

tested positive for the infection during contact tracing.

Odisha now has 29,571 active cases, while 67,826 people have recovered from the disease with 2,503 of them in the past 24 hours. The State's COVID recovery rate currently stands at 69.26%.

The positivity rate in Odisha today stood at 3.32% while the contagion grew at 3.43% in the last 24 hours.

Of the infected persons, 68.1% are men while women constitute 31.9% of total patients. 56.1% of the total patients are in the 15-40 age-group.

The vulnerable groups of patients in 60 year or above and 14 year or below age comprise 14% of the total tally of COVID-19 patients in the State.

Patnaik Sports Award for outstanding performance in sports and games. Both of them received Rs.2 lakh cash each.

The Biju Patnaik Bravery Award was received by Purnima Giri and Sabita Giri who received cash awards of Rs 1 lakh while Satya Ranjan Patnaik got the best coach award.

Besides Siba Prasad Das received a cash award of Rs.32,50,000 for coaching sports persons with disability.

Padmini Rout, Hupi Majhi, Rajashree Mohapatra, Man-

isha Merel, Pratyasha Ray also received cash awards.

Sports & YS Minister Tusharkanta Behera said that the objective of the state is to become the best in sports and games. Former Indian Hockey Captain and MP Padmashree Dillip Tirkey recalled the memories of Biju Babu as a great sports person.

Chief secretary Asit Tripathy, secretary to CM, VKartikayan Pandian, Vishal Dev, Commissioner-cum-Secretary Sports were present.

## Odisha will be a global centre of sports: CM

Jayanti & Deep Grace get Biju Sports Award

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
BHUBANESWAR, 29 AUGUST

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik today presented the Biju Patnaik Sports Award to outstanding sports persons and coaches and reaffirmed his commitment to make Odisha a global centre of sports.

Today Odisha is known globally as a hub of hockey and we are going to host yet another edition of Hockey World Cup in 2023, he said.

The importance of sports and fitness has once again

been highlighted by the Covid pandemic. More than the medals, sports and fitness activities should become a way of life in our society, he said.

Coupled with development of sports infrastructure and coaching facilities at grassroots level, the government has engaged the best of the coaches from across the world at the high performance centres in various sports disciplines, he observed.

Jayanti Behera and Deep Grace Ekka received Biju

Patnaik Sports Award for outstanding performance in sports and games. Both of them received Rs.2 lakh cash each.

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Chief secretary Asit Tripathy, secretary to CM, VKartikayan Pandian, Vishal Dev, Commissioner-cum-Secretary Sports were present.



Chief Minister Navin Patnaik at the Sports Day Celebration & distribution of Biju Patnaik Sports Award through Video Conferencing on Saturday.

## No lockdown in 8 towns

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
BHUBANESWAR, 29 AUGUST

Odisha government today said that there shall no lock down or shut down in Angul, Balasore, Berhampur, Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Dhenkanal, Sambalpur and Rourkela from tomorrow till 7 September and from 12 to 14 September in view of the JEE Main and NEET examinations.

Currently the state has been imposing a weekend lockdown and district authorities have been enforcing shut down and lock down in their respective areas as per the COVID situation.

But to enable hassle free movement of students and their guardians for the examination, the state decided to dispense with any restriction in cities which have examination centers.

### BBSR logs 505 COVID cases

BHUBANESWAR, 29 AUGUST

Bhubaneswar on Saturday witnessed the biggest single day Covid-19 spike with 505 positive cases with the tally leapfrogging to 9,506 while the city's fatality count rose to 40 with two Coronavirus patients succumbing to the virus. Of the 9,506 positive cases, 3,693 are active cases while 5,764 have recovered till date.

## Odisha govt blocks Adani bid for OPGC

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
BHUBANESWAR, 29 AUGUST

Odisha government, a 51 per cent stake holder in the Odisha Power Generation Corporation, decided to take complete control by purchasing the 49 per cent shareholding of US-based AES Corporation.

The bold move to retain full control of OPGC which is considered a profitable modern thermal plant with a coal mine was welcomed by many in the power sector given the costs involved in purchase of AES shares at a little over Rs 1000 crore.

The decision by the government to exercise its "first right of refusal" to AES sale of shares is seen as a courageous step given the fact that Adani Power Limited (APL) had, in June, intimated SEBI that it had entered into a definitive agreement to acquire the 49% stake in Odisha Power Generation Corporation (OPGC) from the affiliates of the AES Corporation (AES).

On 23 June, Adani Power informed SEBI, OPGC operates the supercritical capacity 1,320 MW in Jharsuguda district. The plant has a long-term power purchase agreement (PPA) valid for 25 years with the state-owned off-taker GRIDCO and sources fuel from a nearby captive mine. The Government of Odisha holds 51% stake in OPGC.

Adani Power had stated that the acquisition marks APL's foray into Odisha. OPGC sources said it was well within its rights to exercise the first right of refusal and take the shares of AES at the price quoted by the company.

"It will be a smooth take over as we have engaged professional services of SBI Cap to assess and value. In three months time we will put everything in place" said Energy Minister Dibya Shankar Mishra.

Asked about Adani Power's bid, the Minister said "they were interested, I am not in the know of details. It is between AES and Adani, the government is not concerned about it".

OPGC sources welcomed the decision of the government. The power plant with its coal mine reserves is a gold mine, they said. The challenge ahead is for the government to invest in the ash pond, complete the works undertaken for the third and fourth unit, they added.

Set up in 1984, OPGC Ib Valley Thermal Power Station

had two units of 210MW. The state government had divested 49 per cent of shares in 1998-99 through competitive bidding and AES came in.

OPGC sources said the total assets would work out to Rs 10,090 crore against which term loan outstanding is Rs 6883 crore as on March 2019. The company has been making profit all along and the total dividend paid so far is Rs 1411 crore (Govt Rs 736 crore and AES 675 crore).

It has also invested Rs 956 crore from internal cash accruals in expansion projects like adding two more units, said the sources.

The Unit 3 and 4 of 660mw each was projected to cost Rs 10166 crore and work is on.

The coal block was received after a lot of hard work, they said. The challenges for the government is to make capital expenditure to get the Unit 3 and 4 commissioned at the earliest, invest in renovation of the ash pond, they added.

## Mahanadi flood threat persists

### Situation improves in other river systems

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
BHUBANESWAR, 29 AUGUST

The flood situation in Jajpur and Bhadrak districts continued to be grim even though it improved in Balasore and Mayurbhanj districts, all of which were affected by five rivers three days ago. But the flood in the Mahanadi system is expected in Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Nayagarh, Puri and Kendrapara districts.

Districts in the Mahanadi system have been put on alert. NDRF and ODRAF teams deployed. The floodwaters are likely to reach these districts in the next 24 hours and with forecast of rains from tomorrow, the situation may worsen.

The flood situation in Jajpur district continued to be grim. All ten blocks in the district have been badly affected by the floods caused by Baitarani, Brahmani, Kharasota and Kani, a branch of Brahmani river for the last two days.

Many villages of Baitarani, Brahmani, Kharasota, Kani and Keula rivers were reported at 24 different places.

The situation is grim in Baitarani, Brahmani, Subarnarekha, Budhabalanga that had flooded Jajpur, Bhadrak, Balasore, Mayurbhanj districts showed signs of receding and water levels had dropped below their respective danger levels, informing Special Relief Commissioner P K Jena today.

As of now Jajpur is the worst hit followed by Bhadrak. One lakh people have been evacuated from low-lying areas and thousands of villages marooned.

The flood situation in Jajpur district continued to be grim. All ten blocks in the district have been badly affected by the floods caused by Baitarani, Brahmani, Kharasota and Kani, a branch of Brahmani river for the last two days.

Many villages of Baitarani, Brahmani, Kharasota, Kani and Keula rivers were reported at 24 different places.

The situation in Jajpur, Korei and Dasarathapur blocks are expected to improve soon as the water level in the Baitarani has receded," said Jajpur Collector Ranjan Kumar Das. The collector said as many as 127 free kitchens of the district have been cut-off with the rest of the world.

Road link between Bari and Kuakhia, Jajpur town and Bhandaripokhari, Bari and Kaipa, Barf and Ratnagiri have been cut off as these roads are under neck deep water caused by the flood.

Breaches in embankments of Baitarani, Brahmani, Kharasota, Kani and Keula rivers were reported at 24 different places.

The situation in Jajpur, Korei and Dasarathapur blocks are expected to improve soon as the water level in the Baitarani has receded," said Jajpur Collector Ranjan Kumar Das. The collector said as many as 127 free kitchens of the district have been cut-off with the rest of the world.

Terwith the villagers but they were in favour of settling the issue among themselves. Besides, the parents of the victims were also scared, he said.

However, after being assured protection, her father offered cooperation seeking justice for his daughter and stringent punishment to the culprits.

Police have registered cases against the accused persons under relevant sections of Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and Indian Penal Code. They are being interrogated, the police added.

## Tribal girl gang raped for eight months: Six held

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
RAYAGADA, 29 AUGUST

Six persons, who had allegedly raped a minor tribal for a period of eight months and impregnated her, were arrested in Odisha's Rayagada district, police said.

Rayagada SP, Sarvana Vivek M said that the six accused persons have been arrested and forwarded to the court. The victim is now in police protection and her statements will be recorded soon, he said.

The victim, a 14-year-old

girl, was found to be six months pregnant as the perpetrators were sexually assaulting her for eight months. They were arrested on Thursday.

The girl, whose parents are daily wage earners, was abducted by the accused persons. She was taken to a nearby forest where they had raped her one after another and released her issuing threats not to divulge the sexual assault inflicted upon her pregnancy.

The victim's ordeal did not stop there. As she kept mum, the perpetrators took it as an opportunity and continued their sex-

ual assault on her separately at regular intervals. She was not spared even during her pregnancy.

Later the victim confided her harrowing ordeal before her mother. Then with the help of the local Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) worker, the victim was taken to the government hospital at Gunupur where the doctors confirmed her pregnancy.

Meanwhile, Ramesh Chandra Nayak, Rayagada District Child Protection Officer said that he had taken up the mat-

## Scarcity hits cremation of the dead

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
PARALAKHUMI, 29 AUGUST

ilities of the town, and costing Rs 3 to 4 per piece. The requirement was around 3000 pieces per cremation.

"When I first joined Paralakhumi as Tahsildar, I was surprised when I saw dung cakes being used during funerals. In my native place in Ganjam we use timber" said former bureaucrat Purna Chandra Mohapatra.

Since the last three months the families who prepared the dung cakes have stopped doing so causing a scarcity and

consequent difficulties in cremation.

Congress leader, Basant Kumar Panda raised the problem on social media recently. Over the months of June and July bereaved families had to run around trying to collect timber. There are a few instances when the funeral was delayed by a day due to non availability of timber, said Panda.

A delegation of local people met the District Collector and apprised him about the crisis. The collector has

promised to supply wood at a reasonable rate.

Executive Officer of Paralakhumi Municipality Ashok Kumar Rout has in a social media message stated that the OFDC



The US armed forces will have no role in carrying out the election process or resolving a disputed vote

CHAIRMAN OF US JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF, GENERAL MARK MILLEY  
STRESSING HE BELIEVES IN THE PRINCIPLE OF AN APOITICAL US MILITARY

## THUMBNAILS



A group of children play at a playground in Jakarta on Saturday.

AFP

**China building collapses:** 17 people were killed after a restaurant collapsed in north China's Shanxi province on Saturday, authorities said. The accident took place at around 9:40 a.m. in Xiangfen county in Linfen. 45 people had been pulled out of debris.

PTI

**Belarus crackdown:** After three weeks of massive protests against its authoritarian president, Belarus on Saturday cracked down hard on the news media, deporting some foreign journalists reporting in the country and revoking the accreditation of many Belarusian journalists.

AFP

**Sweden riots:** Far-right activists burned a Quran in the southern Swedish city of Malmö, sparking riots and unrest after more than 300 people gathered to protest, police said Saturday. Rioters set fires and threw objects at police and rescue services on Friday night, injuring several police officers and detaining about 15 people.

AFP

**Laura toll reaches 14:** The death toll due to the Category 4 Hurricane Laura, that lashed Louisiana and Texas, has increased to 14. Ten of the victims were in Louisiana and four in Texas.

IANS

**French magazine apologises after depicting Black lawmaker as slave**

PARIS, 29 AUGUST

A French magazine has apologised after portraying a Black lawmaker as a slave, as France's government and officials across the political spectrum decried the publication.

The legislator, Danielle Obono from the far-left party Defiant France, said the publication flies in the face of those who complain that free speech is threatened by the fight against racism and sexism. You can still write racist s- in a rag illustrated with a Black French parliament member repainted as a slave," she tweeted. The extreme right odious, stupid and cruel.

The magazine, *Valeurs Actuelles*, which caters to readers on the right and far right, apologised. Deputy editor Tagdou Denis said Saturday that the image wasn't designed to wound Obono, and denied that it was an attention-getting ploy. But he added: What I regret is that we are always accused of racism... we are politically incorrect, it's in our DNA. Anti-racism activists said the publication reflected a creeping acceptance of extremist views, fuelled by social media.

Prime Minister Jean Castex from the conservative Republicans party tweeted: This revolting publication calls for unambiguous condemnation... The fight against racism will always transcend our differences.

The junior minister for equality and the only Black member of the French government, Elisabeth Moreno, tweeted that "I don't share Obono's ideas, but today I offer her all my support."

A similar refrain came from politicians from multiple parties.

France saw multiple protests in June and July against racial injustice and police brutality inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement and George Floyd's death in US.

AP

# Pantherstar dies after battle with cancer

Chadwick Boseman, known for titular superhero role, passes away at 43; diagnosed with colon cancer

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
LOS ANGELES, 29 AUGUST

American actor Chadwick Boseman, best known for his titular superhero role in "Black Panther" and as baseball icon Jackie Robinson in "42", has died after a four-year-long secret battle with colon cancer. He was 43.

In a statement posted on his official Twitter handle, the actor's family said Boseman was diagnosed with the disease in 2016.

He passed away at his residence here with his wife and family by his side.

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

"From 'Marshall' to 'Da 5 Bloods', August Wilson's 'Ma Rainey's Black Bottom' and several more-all were filmed during and between countless surgeries and chemotherapy. It was the honour of his career to bring King T'Challa

to life in 'Black Panther,'" they added.

Born in South Carolina to African-Americans Carolyn and Leroy Boseman, the actor studied at Howard University and graduated with a degree in directing.

Later, he attended the Oxford Mid-Summer Program of the British American Drama Academy in London and then to New York City's Digital Film Academy.

He initially worked as a drama instructor at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in Harlem, New York but moved to Los Angeles to pursue acting full-time.

Boseman started his career on the small screen with 2003 "Third Watch", featuring in just one episode. He made similar appearances in popular shows such as "Law & Order", "CSI: NY" and "ER".

He made his film debut with a minor role in 2008 sports drama "The Express: The Ernie Davis Story". His first movie as a lead star came in 2012's "The Kill Hole".

The following year, Bose-

man played baseball star Robinson opposite Harrison Ford in "42". The film, which dealt with the issue of racial integration in American baseball, catapulted him to fame in Hollywood.

The actor was praised for his authentic and stoic portrayal of the former baseball player. Coincidentally, Boseman died on a day that Major League Baseball was celebrating Jackie Robinson day.

His next memorable role was in "Get on Up", Tate Taylor's biographical drama on the life of singer James Brown.

But it was his turn as Wakanda king T'Challa aka superhero Black Panther, a role he played in four Marvel films, that brought him global popularity. He was first introduced in 2016's blockbuster "Captain America: Civil War".

Two years later, the actor made history by leading a virtually all-Black cast with solo Marvel movie "Black Panther".

The Ryan Coogler-directed feature is considered a landmark film for the way it

projects Black identity. Boseman played T'Challa who takes on the mantle of Black Panther after his father, T'Chaka, the king of the fictional but powerful African country Wakanda, dies in a bomb blast.

"Black Panther" was a major hit for Disney-owned Marvel Studios, grossing over \$1.3 billion in worldwide gross and becoming the first superhero film to be nominated for the Best Picture at Oscars.

The film is also popular for giving the "Wakanda Forever" salute that reverberated around the world soon after the film's release and started trending on social media as the news about the actor's death spread.

Boseman reprised the role of Black Panther for Anthony and Joe Russo's two-part "Avengers" epic - "Infinity War" and "Endgame". Both the films were global hits.

He had recently appeared in Oscar-winning filmmaker Spike Lee's timely movie "Da 5 Bloods", about a group of aging Vietnam War veterans who return to the country in search of the remains of their fallen squad leader.

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*China must build an impregnable fortress to maintain stability in Tibet, protect unity & educate masses in the fight against secessionism.*

CHINESE PRESIDENT XI JINPING

SAYING CHINA NEEDS TO STEP UP EFFORTS TO FIGHT SECESSIONISM IN TIBET

The Sunday Statesman  
NEW DELHI, 30 AUGUST 2020

11

## Berlin police shut down protest against virus restrictions

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
BERLIN, 29 AUGUST

Berlin police ordered a protest by people opposed to Germany's pandemic restrictions to disband Saturday after participants refused to observe social distancing rules.

Tens of thousands of people had gathered at the German capital's iconic Brandenburg Gate in the morning before streaming down the Unter den Linden boulevard in a show of defiance against Germany's coronavirus prevention measures.

Protesters carried a wide range of grievances and banners proclaiming their opposition to vaccinations, face masks and the government in general. Some waved American, Russian or German Reich flags, while others had T-shirts promoting the QAnon conspiracy theory. Several wore clothing with white nationalist slogans and neo-Nazi insignia, but most participants denied having far-right views.

Uwe Bachmann, 57, said he had come from southwestern Germany to protest for free speech and his right not to wear a mask. I respect those who are afraid of the virus, said Bachmann, who was wearing a costume and a wig that tried to evoke stereotypical Native American attire.

He suggested, without elaborating, that something else was behind the pandemic. Another protester said he wanted Germany's current political system abolished and a return to the constitution of 1871 on the grounds that the country's post-war political system was illegal.

Providing only his first name, Karl-Heinz, he had traveled with his sister from their home near the Dutch border to attend the protest and believed that the coronavirus



cases being reported in Germany now were false positives. Germany has seen an upswing in new cases in recent weeks. The country's disease control agency reported Saturday that Germany had almost 1,500 new infections over the past day. Germany has been praised for the way it has handled the pandemic, and the country's death toll of some 9,300 people is less than one-fourth the amount of people who have died of COVID-19 in Britain.

Berlin's regional government had sought to ban the protest, citing anti-mask rallies earlier this month where rules intended to stop the virus from being spread further weren't respected.

Protest organizers successfully appealed the decision Friday, though a court ordered them to ensure social distancing. Failure to enforce that measure prompted Berlin police to dissolve the march.

Along the route were several smaller counter-protests where participants shouted slogans against the far-right's presence at the anti-mask rally. I think there's a line and if someone takes to the streets with neo-Nazis then they've crossed that line, said Verena, a counter-protester from Berlin who declined to provide her surname.

## UAE formally ends Israel boycott

The announcement came amidst a US-brokered deal to normalise relations between the two countries

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
DUBAI, 29 AUGUST

The ruler of the United Arab Emirates issued a decree on Saturday formally ending the country's boycott of Israel amid a US-brokered deal to normalise relations between the two countries.

The announcement now allows trade and commerce between the UAE, home to oil-rich Abu Dhabi and skyscraper-studded Dubai, and Israel, home to a thriving diamond trade, pharmaceutical companies and tech start-ups.

The announcement further cements the August 13 deal opening up relations between the two nations, which required Israel to halt its contentious plan to annex occupied West Bank land sought by the Palestinians.

The state-run WAM news agency said the decree formally ending the boycott came on



the orders of Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the ruler of Abu Dhabi and the Emirates' leader.

WAM said the new decree allows Israelis and Israeli firms to do business in the UAE, a federation of seven sheikhdoms on the Arabian Peninsula. It also allows for the purchase and trade of Israeli goods. The decree of the new law comes within the UAE's efforts to expand diplomatic and commercial cooperation with Israel, WAM said. It lays out a roadmap toward launching joint cooperation, leading to bilateral relations by stimulating



economic growth and promoting technological innovation.

Already, some Israeli firms had signed deals with Emirati counterparts. But the repeal of the law widens the likelihood of other joint ventures, such as in aviation or in banking and finance. Dubai International Airport, home to the long-haul carrier Emirates, has been the world's busiest for international travel for years. The Dubai International Financial Centre also hosts major firms who trade in the hours between Asian and European markets. Dubai already has a

major gold market and growing diamond trade. Emirati firms likely also want to access Israeli technological know-how.

Some already had even before the deal with the cybersecurity firm DarkMatter reportedly hiring Israeli military-trained hackers. On Monday, the first direct commercial flight by Israel's flagship carrier El Al is expected in Abu Dhabi, carrying US and Israeli officials including President Donald Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner. Telephone calls already can be made between the nations.

The decree formally eliminates a 1972 law on the UAE's books since just after the country's formation. That law mirrored the widely held stance by Arab nations at that time that recognition of Israel would only come after the Palestinians had an independent state of their own. The UAE is becoming the third Arab

nation after Egypt and Jordan to currently have diplomatic relations with Israel. However, widespread public distrust of Israel persists in those nations, the UAE never fought a war against Israel, nor did it have a historic Jewish population.

In recent years, the UAE has held quiet talks with Israel and allowed Israelis with second passports into the country for trade and talks. Opening ties may also help the Emirates access advanced American weaponry, like the F-35 fighter jet that right now only Israel flies in the Mideast.

Sheikh Khalifa has ruled the UAE since 2004. He suffered a stroke on January 24, 2014, and underwent emergency surgery. He has been rarely seen since in public, though state media typically publishes images of him around Islamic holidays. Abu Dhabi's crown prince, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, has served

as the UAE's day-to-day ruler since Sheikh Khalifa's stroke. Sheikh Mohammed has focused on increasing the Emirates' military might amid his suspicion of Iran as an enemy shared by Israel.

While Sheikh Khalifa holds the title of president, the UAE is governed by autocratic sheikhs. Abu Dhabi, as the country's oil-rich capital, has grown increasingly powerful since the UAE's founding in 1971 despite each sheikhdom largely governing its own affairs. The decree comes after a trip through the Mideast in recent days by US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, who hoped to build on the UAE-Israel deal.

The accord also came as a major foreign policy win to Trump as he campaigns ahead of the November election against Democratic candidate Joe Biden. Both Israel and the UAE have viewed the Republican president as a ally.

### CAMPAIGN TIME



A supporter of Tanzania's ruling party Chama Cha Mapinduzi holds a sign during the official launch of the party's campaign for the October general election at the Jamhuri stadium in Dodoma, Tanzania, on Saturday. ■ AFP

## Divisions emerge between Mali's military junta and opposition leaders

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
BAMAKO, 29 AUGUST

Tensions mounted on Saturday between Mali's military junta and the country's long-time political opposition after the coup leaders failed to invite prominent opposition figures to a planned forum on the country's political future.

The meeting ultimately was cancelled and the junta leadership instead met with imam Mahmoud Dicko, an opposition leader who on Friday urged the junta to speed up the transition to civilian rule so the West African country could avoid further crushing financial sanctions.

Task them to be part of the solution and not another problem, he said. Only a week earlier, the opposition coalition known as M5-RFP that

includes Dicko had publicly backed the coup, with thousands of their supporters taking to the streets after the junta's overthrow of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita.

M5-RFP had led several months of demonstrations calling for his resignation three years before his final term was due to end.

In a statement late Friday, one M5-RFP leader said the alliance regretted not being invited to take part in Saturday's planned discussions between the junta and various political actors.

The M5-RFP is and remains a major player in this desired change and must be at the forefront in determining the structure of the transition, Choguel Maiga said. The path back to democracy has been a stumbling point with West African heads of state, who on Friday urged the junta to restore civilian rule within a year. But the junta has proposed a three-year timeline. That has led to unraveling of talks and more threats of sanctions.

The regional bloc known as ECOWAS already has cut financial flows to Mali, and neighbouring countries have closed borders in a bid to step up pressure on the leaders. The international community has expressed alarm over the coup, fearing that the political vacuum could allow Islamic extremists to expand their reach. A similar coup in 2012 led to the militants overtaking major towns in the north where they implemented their strict interpretation of Islamic law, amputating hands of those charged with theft.

## Bangladesh: Shutdown of Schools, colleges extended till 3 October

**Schools, colleges, universities and other educational institutions were ordered to close since the first cases of Covid-19 appeared in March. The shutdown has been extended several times since then.**

DHAKA, 29 AUGUST

Bangladesh has extended the shutdown of educational institutions, except madrasas, till October 3 due to the coronavirus pandemic, the education ministry has said.

Schools, colleges, universities and other educational institutions were ordered to close since the first cases of Covid-19 appeared in March. The shutdown has been extended several times since then.

"The ongoing holiday for all educational institutions, except Qawmi madrasas, has been extended to October 3 because of the global coronavirus pandemic," bdnews24 quoted the education ministry as saying on Thursday.

Qawmi madrasas operate without any government monitoring, supervision or support. They run with private donations mostly.

The government has also suspended the primary education completion and equivalent examinations this year due to the coronavirus crisis, the bdnews24 report said.

According to a report in Dhaka Tribune, the government has been running a distance-learning program through TV for schools and colleges. Classes are taking place on Facebook and YouTube for primary and secondary-level students as well.

Bangladesh has reported over 308,900 COVID-19 cases and more than 4,200 deaths, according to the Johns Hopkins university data. PTI

## Reform process of Lankan Constitution underway very soon: Minister

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
COLOMBO, 29 AUGUST

abolish the 19th Amendment during his ceremonial address to Parliament last week.

The 19A Amendment adopted in 2015 by the then reformist government was subject to much criticism by the Rajapaksa clan as it prevented dual citizens from contesting elections. At the time, two of the Rajapaksa family members including the current president were dual citizens of the US and Sri Lanka.

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and SLPP founder and its National Organiser Basil Rajapaksa is a dual citizen of US and Sri Lanka. There are 5 of them already in government. During the August 5 election, the Sri Lanka People's Party (SLPP) sought two thirds parliamentary mandate or 150 seats in the 225-member assembly to effect constitutional changes, the

foremost of them was the move to abolish the 19A.

The SLPP and allies won 150 seats and have a two-third majority to effect the constitutional change they desire.

While Gotabaya Rajapaksa was elected as the Sri Lankan President in November last year, his eldest brother Mahinda Rajapaksa won the general election and assumed charge as Prime Minister on August 9.

The Opposition has accused the government of trying to abolish 19A to make room for another member of the Rajapaksa family to enter Parliament.

The 19A was the main election plank of the previous government. The 19A depoliticised the government administration by ensuring the independence of key pillars such as the judiciary, public service and elections.

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
SEOUL, 29 AUGUST

South Korea has reported 323 new cases of the coronavirus as health officials prepare to tighten distancing restrictions in the greater capital area. The 16th consecutive day of triple-digit jumps brought the national caseload to 19,400. Fatalities reached 321 after five more deaths overnight.

The Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Saturday that 249 of the new cases came from the densely populated Seoul metropolitan area, where about half of the country's 51 million people live.

Health workers have struggled to track infections linked to churches, restaurants, schools and apartment buildings.

The country has added 4,630 cases over the last 16 days, raising fears about overwhelming hospitals.

Kwon Jun-wook, director of South Korea's National Health Institute, said the death toll

could rise in the coming weeks as many of those who tested positive this month were 60 years or older, an age group that's more likely to experience serious health complications caused by the virus.

He said 64 of the country's active patients are in critical condition, compared to 14 on Aug. 14, when the country began the current streak of triple-digit daily increases.

While young people may think that Covid-19 is an illness

they could recover from after a certain period, it could become a life and death matter for parents and grandparents they love and also people with existing medical conditions, Kwon said during a briefing, pleading for vigilance in social distancing. Each and every one of us... is at war with Covid-19.

"In war, we need to maintain unity to protect the safety of ourselves and our neighbors and prevent the collapse

of all our social systems. More than 1,000 infections have been linked to a northern Seoul church led by a conservative pastor who opposes the country's president.

The spread worsened after thousands of anti-government protesters, including members of the Sarang Jeil Church and its pastor, Jun Kwang-hun, marched in downtown Seoul on Aug. 15. More than 300, including Jun, have tested positive. Malaysia has extended its pandemic restrictions including banning foreign tourists until the year end. PM Muhyiddin Yassin said in a televised address late Friday that global cases have been rising and the country has seen sporadic virus clusters even though the situation was under control.

Malaysia has recorded more than 9,000 cases with 125 deaths. Muhyiddin said the extension of restrictions will not disrupt daily activities as most businesses and schools have resumed.

## Umno wins Slim seat, trouncing Mahathir's new party

SHANNON TEOH  
KUALA LUMPUR, 29 AUGUST



Malaysia's largest ruling party Umno scored a thumping victory with 85 per cent of the vote in Saturday's (Aug 29) by-election in Slim, trouncing former prime minister Mahathir Mohamad's weeks-old party Pejuang.

Party Pejuang Tanah Air, in its electoral debut, failed to make a dent in Umno's stronghold of Slim, garnering less than 14 per cent of the vote for the Perak state assembly seat. Umno candidate Mohd Zaidi Aziz (photo), who contested under the Barisan Nasional flag, received 13,060 votes, soundly defeating Pejuang's Amir Khusyairi Mohamad Tanus who only managed 2,115 votes. Independent candidate Santharekaran Subramaniam meanwhile received 276 votes. Safety procedures to curb the spread of the coronavirus were in place at all 12 polling stations, with voters allotted time slots and required to socially distance and have their temperature taken. Umno had defended the seat in the 2018 general election with

tion led the Pakatan Harapan coalition, which then included Bersatu, to a shock win that ended Umno's six-decade rule. But Umno's landslide victory on Saturday indicates that Dr Mahathir faces an uphill battle to repeat his former success with Pejuang, if, as widely speculated, national polls are called in the next six months.

Umno president Ahmad Zahid Hamdi said the margin of victory showed Umno was gaining back the support of those who had turned their backs on the party at the last polls.

"This shows the voters have missed us," he told reporters. "This will be further revealed if the Sabah state elections or GE15 are held," he said, referring to the next general election. Three-quarters of the voters in Slim are Malay Muslim, who make up the majority in more than half of Malaysia's parliamentary constituencies.

The results show that most of those who had voted for Bersatu in 2018, when Dr Mahathir was still its chairman, did not back his new party on Saturday. Pejuang was formed

to go up against the three Malay parties in PN but this by-election has shown it will need a miracle to mount a credible challenge at the next general election," risk consultancy Bower Group Asia's director Adib Zalkapli told The Straits Times.

This was the third by-election since Mr Muhyiddin led Bersatu out of the Pakatan Harapan (PH) government, and all three have been won by Umno. This was also the only by-election of the three that saw an opposition candidate try to win a Malay majority seat, providing the first real bellwether of the crucial Malay vote.

Just over two-thirds of the 22,749 registered voters in Slim cast their ballots, less than the 81 per cent two years ago, reflecting voter fatigue that was apparent during the two-week campaign.

If the outcome in Slim is indicative of the national sentiment among Malay voters, it would mean that Pejuang, as well as other opposition parties will struggle to galvanise enough support to unseat the current government.

THE STRAITS TIMES / ANN

## UN expresses concern over 'dramatic turn' in Libya crisis

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
CAIRO, 29 AUGUST

The United Nations on Saturday voiced alarm over what it called a dramatic turn of events in Libya's civil war, after a power struggle between leaders of the Tripoli-based government surfaced in the wake of anti-corruption protests.

Libya is witnessing a dramatic turn of events that underlines the urgent need to return to a full and inclusive political process, the U.N. support mission in Libya said.

Protests over deteriorating economic conditions erupted earlier this week in the capital and elsewhere in western Libya, which is controlled by forces loyal to the U.N.-supported government.

In Tripoli, local militia allied with the government opened fire on the demonstrators using rifles and truck-mounted guns, and abducted some of the protesters. Prime Minister Fayez Sarraj and his interior minister, Fathi Bashaga, initially accused outlawed infiltrators over the violence.



**A DIFFERENT GAME**  
Lionel Messi (in photo, left) continues to push for a move away from Barcelona, with Manchester City putting together their opening offer. City are rated alongside Paris Saint-Germain as the most likely destination for him, offering three players plus cash to land him.

For more updates

www.thestatesman.com

**THUMBNAILS**

**Yagnik recovers:** Rajasthan Royals' fielding coach Dinesh Yagnik has recovered from Covid-19 and joined his team in Dubai ahead of the Indian Premier League after clearing two consecutive coronavirus tests. The 37-year-old Yagnik tested positive on 12 August.

**Telly threat:** Australia's Channel Seven said on Friday the broadcaster might end its contract with Cricket Australia over its handling of the summer schedule. Word is the Big Bash League might be a coronavirus-hit competition without international players.

**Cup crisis:** The Asian Football Confederation could be forced to cancel the AFC Cup owing to the aggravation of Covid-19 in host countries. The coronavirus has spread throughout the continent, forcing the continental body to reschedule the remaining group matches.

**Milan deal:** Zlatan Ibrahimovic will remain at AC Milan next season having reached agreement on a new deal reportedly worth 7 million euros without bonuses. Ibrahimovic on Friday posted a photo of himself on social media in an AC Milan jersey.

**Chelsea's gain:** Chelsea have announced the signing of Paris Saint-Germain defender Thiago Silva. The centre-back, 35, moves to Stamford Bridge on a one-year deal. The Blues also reportedly have the option to extend the player's contract by another 12 months.

**Big scare:** Manchester United captain Harry Maguire has said he "feared for his life" when arrested in Mykonos. The England footballer, the world's most expensive defender, was found guilty of bodily harm, attempted bribery, and violence against public employees.

**Hard luck:** Injury-plagued Juan Martin del Potro has undergone a third operation on the right knee he broke at the 2018 Shanghai Masters and found immediate sympathy from world number one Novak Djokovic. The 31-year-old has now had seven major operations.

**Rule changed:** Teams will only be withdrawn from the Tour de France and the Grand Tours this season if two or more riders test positive for the coronavirus in seven days. Protocols earlier said they would be sent home if any two riders or staff members had positive tests.

**Virus vaccine:** Japan is trying to grab enough coronavirus vaccine to inoculate its people four times over, a push the government hopes will instil confidence it can host a delayed summer Olympics next year. It is signing multiple deals as some of the vaccines could fail.

**India enter Online Chess Olympiad final:** World Rapid Chess Champion Koneru Humpy paved the way for India's entry into the final of the FIDE Online Olympiad by winning her game in the Armageddon. Humpy out-classed Poland's Monika Socko in the final game to assure India of at least one of the top two positions in the Online Olympiad. It was a dramatic comeback for India after getting outclassed by Poland in the first match 4-2. In the second match, the Asian chess power house showed its class to humble Poland 4.5-1.5.

**Osaka pulls out of final:** Naomi Osaka pulled out of the Western & Southern Open final Saturday because of a left hamstring injury, giving the title to Victoria Azarenka in a walkover. The tournament announced Osaka's decision about 90 minutes before the championship match was supposed to begin in Louis Armstrong Stadium at the site of the U.S. Open.

**Taking it to West Asia was akin to walking a tightrope**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, 29 AUGUST

There were those who, in fits of concealed verbal aggression, said the Indian Premier League and the Board of Control for Cricket in India were not to be hauled over the coals for what had befallen Chennai Super Kings in West Asia. They are on the gravy train, Covid-19 or no Covid-19. And they were contradicted by lots of doctors and even veteran but vulnerable cricket administrators who spoke bitterly of the BCCI's "reckless adventurism" in taking the IPL to West Asia during a worldwide pandemic when it couldn't be staged in India for obvious reasons. The thing is that the board's critics insisted on anonymity. Maybe they hope the gravy train will chug up to them.

"So much for the bio-secure bubble they'd said

bogusly by a former scientific officer of the Sports Authority of India, highlighted by The Statesman.

"They're being hasty," she had said. Now, as India today woke up to confront the frightening reality, it was quite clear that the official silence till then of the IPL's governing council and the cricket board wasn't just about riding out a storm of extremely hostile criticism but about attempts at picking up the pieces and moving on. Maybe there is still plenty of money in it for some people to scoop up.

They will brazen it out. Well might the Indian board talk of positive coronavirus tests in reset European football - Sourav Ganguly (in photo) is a soccer fan himself, apart from being a high-up in ATK Mohun Bagan - but two wrongs never made one right.

The bad reports from Europe should really have

persuaded the BCCI from going ahead with the IPL in an exhibition of bull-headed energy at a time amid so many deaths and infections at a time the world now reckons among the worst-ever. And none of the domestic European domestic leagues has had to be shifted abroad for completion. Nor will it do to say

**Difficult season ahead, says Arteta**  
LONDON, 29 AUGUST

Arsenal head coach Mikel Arteta believes the spike in coronavirus infections among Premier League players proves the forthcoming season is on a knife edge.

A number of players have tested positive for Covid-19 as they return from short holidays to begin pre-season training ahead of the top-flight kick-off on 12 September. Manchester United midfielder Paul Pogba

and Tottenham's Tangy Ndombele were left out of the France squad having returned positive results.

Arteta was the first high-profile patient among the British football community when he was struck down by Covid-19 in March, the catalyst for the season being halted as the pandemic took hold. He recovered fully before guiding the Gunners to FA Cup success. *THE INDEPENDENT*

that it's only CSK who are affected. The point is that faultlines are being seen and the board should have apprehended these. Money happens to be its chief concern but when it ignores everything else in its relentless pursuit of it, things wobble. Which is why West Asia is now so much quicksand for it.

**IPL: 13 including 2 players are Corona positive, confirms BCCI**INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 29 AUGUST

tacts are asymptomatic and have been isolated from other team members. They are being monitored by the IPL Medical Team."

The BCCI further said that a total of 1,988 RT-PCR COVID tests were carried out between August 20 and 28 across all participant groups in the UAE. "These groups include players, support staff, team management, BCCI staff, IPL Operational team, hotel and ground transport staff. As per the IPL 2020 Health and Safety Protocols, testing on all participants will be conducted regularly throughout the IPL 2020 season," the statement read.

"The BCCI has put in place stringent health and safety protocols for the Dream11 Indian Premier League 2020 Season, which is scheduled to start from September 19 in the UAE. Accordingly, upon landing in the UAE, all the participants have followed a mandatory testing and quarantine programme," the BCCI said.

At a time when big politicians and athletes like Amit Shah, Amitabh Bachchan, Shrikrishna Chauhan, and Vinesh Phogat have voluntarily announced their COVID-19 positive results, the BCCI has chosen not to share the names of the infected members.

"The other IPL teams in the UAE are also now scared. They are in talks with the BCCI. You can't hide the names. If they [BCCI] won't tell, the Emirate Cricket Board (ECB) might reveal it. For the safety of everybody, it is important to share the names. What is so shameful about it? Why is the BCCI acting so unprofessionally?" sources in the UAE told IANS.

**Raina pulls out from IPL due to 'personal reasons'**

NEW DELHI, 29 AUGUST

Chennai Super Kings all-rounder Suresh Raina has pulled out of the Indian Premier League citing "personal reasons", the franchise said on Saturday even as it emerged that a second player in the team has tested positive for COVID-19.

The player in question is a right-handed top-order batsman, who has been a part of India A teams in recent past and is a prolific performer in Ranji Trophy. On Friday, a T20 specialist pacer had tested positive along with 12 members of the contingent in Dubai.

While it is expected that Raina will be issuing a statement later in the day, sources close to the franchise said that one of the biggest draws in IPL desperately needs some downtime to be with his

young family at the moment.

The 33-year-old had retired from international cricket earlier this month.

"Suresh Raina has returned to India for personal reasons and will be unavailable for the remainder of the IPL season. Chennai Super Kings offers complete support to Suresh and his family during this time," CSK tweeted CEO Kasi Viswanathan's statement.

CSK's quarantine period in Dubai has already been extended till September 1.

"Suresh's absence will be a big blow for the CSK and also, he is one of the biggest draws in IPL. But in these times, if any player doesn't feel 100 per cent and has some other pressing priorities, any team respects that and CSK is no different," a senior IPL official privy to development in CSK camp told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

**Hamilton takes Belgian GP pole position, Ferrari struggles**AGENCIES  
SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS (BELGIUM), 29 AUGUST

Lewis Hamilton stormed to a dominant pole position in qualifying for the Belgian Grand Prix on Saturday ahead of team mate Valterri Bottas who completed a front-row lockout for Mercedes while rivals Ferrari endured a miserable day.

Alexander Albon in the other Red Bull was fifth ahead of Ricciardo's team mate Esteban Ocon. Carlos Sainz was seventh for McLaren ahead of Racing Point duo Sergio Perez and Lance Stroll, while Lando Norris rounded out the top 10 for McLaren.

Ferrari, winners in Belgium for the last two years, had gone into qualifying facing the prospect of a knockout in the first part after a dismal practice showing in which four-time champion Sebastian Vettel was last. They survived the opening 18 minutes but failed to make it through to the pole-position shoot-out.

Charles Leclerc, who took his maiden Formula One win in Belgium last year, was 13th with Vettel, who is leaving Ferrari at the end of the year, 14th.

**Djokovic, Pospisil would lead new men's tennis group**ASSOCIATED PRESS  
NEW YORK, 29 AUGUST

No 1-ranked Novak Djokovic (in photo) and former top-30 member Vasek Pospisil would be the co-presidents of a new group they are trying to set up to represent men's professional tennis players.

A letter e-mailed to players -- and obtained by *The Associated Press* yesterday -- pushes the formation of a Professional Tennis Players Association, abbreviated PTPA.

Sent around shortly before Monday's start of the US Open, the letter says its objective is "to solicit support from players to form an association with a mandate to promote, protect and represent the interests of its players ... and protect the future of tennis."

Tennis players never have had a union the way North American team sports do. Each player is considered an independent contractor. "Unlike many other professional sports, men's professional tennis has never had a representative body that is represented for play-

ers by players," the e-mail said. The men's tennis tour is organised by the Association of Tennis Professionals; the women's tennis tour is run by the Women's Tennis Association. Djokovic is the president of the ATP Player Council and Pospisil has been a member for two years, but he tweeted last night that he was resigning.

"It has become clear that, as a player council member within the current structure of the ATP, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to have any significant impact on any major decisions made by our tour," Pospisil wrote. There was talk

of two co-presidents with two-year terms -- and that first leadership role would be Djokovic, a 33-year-old from Serbia who owns 17 Grand Slam singles trophies, and Pospisil, a 30-year-old from Canada who won the 2014 Wimbledon doubles title and is currently No 92 in singles. Among the areas the PTPA would look into, according to

the email: ATP and tournament rules and regulations, revenue-sharing, disciplinary actions, pensions, travel, on-site food and amenities, insurance and medical care.

This proposal would set up something just for men ranked in the top 500 in singles and top 200 in doubles.

The goal of the PTPA is not to replace the ATP but to provide players with a self-governance structure that is independent from the ATP and is directly responsive to players' needs and concerns," the email said.

The letter said the PTPA would be governed by a board of trustees with up to nine members, elected annually.

The trustees would appoint two co-presidents with two-year terms -- and that first leadership role would be Djokovic, a 33-year-old from Serbia who owns 17 Grand Slam singles trophies, and Pospisil, a 30-year-old from Canada who won the 2014 Wimbledon doubles title and is currently No 92 in singles. Among the areas the PTPA would look into, according to

**In a first, sportspersons receive national honours virtually**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 29 AUGUST

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

This year a whopping 74 winners were picked for the national honours, including an unprecedented five Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna and 27 Arjuna awardees. Of these, 60 attended the virtual ceremony conducted across 11 Sports Authority of India (SAI) centres in various cities.

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

dreaded virus. The other three Khel Ratna winners -- TT player Manika Batra, Paralympic gold-medallist Mariappan Thangavelu and women's shockey captain Rani Rampal -- attended the ceremony.

While Balbir Singh from Punjab, Thangavelu and Rampal joined from Bengaluru.

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

Missing, however, was the grandeur of the Rashtrapati Bhavan's Durbar Hall. "This is the first awards ceremony in COVID times during which the President has participated," Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju said at the beginning of the ceremony.

The athletes can look forward to enhanced cash awards this year. The prize money for the Khel Ratna was increased to Rs 25 lakh from the previous amount of Rs 7.5 lakh this morning. Arjuna awardees, 22 of whom attended the ceremony, were given Rs 15 lakh, which

is Rs 10 lakh more than the previous sum. The Dronacharya (Lifetime) awardees, who were earlier given Rs 5 lakh, were awarded Rs 15 lakh, while the regular Dronacharya came with Rs 10 lakh instead of Rs 5 lakh per awardee.

Dhyanchand awardees were given Rs 10 lakh instead of Rs 5 lakh. The strict COVID-19 protocol meant that for the first time in 44 years' history of the awards, the winners, guests and dignitaries did not gather at the Durbar Hall to be recognised for their excellence.

President Kovind congratulated all the winners and exuded confidence that India can achieve its goal of finishing among top-10 countries in the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

"My heartiest congratulations to all the award winners! All of you, through your performance, have provided unforgettable moments of collective success to all Indians," Kovind said in his address during the ceremony, which lasted little more than an hour.

**Chasing fortune when training harder might have helped**

PULAKESH MUKHOPADHYAY

District-level sport organisers and virtually self-appointed mentors - many of them with no entrenched self-interest whatsoever - try to avoid being heard theorising. The city makes them feel small and, though today's commercially restructured metropolitan organisations and competitions make it far less attractive than it used to be when money mattered much less, the voice that gets

heard happens to be its. Which may be why something that should have been said years ago, when the domineering instincts of new wave, balance sheet-conscious sport began being felt for the first time.

"If you set cricket aside and acknowledge that badminton's assorted achievements owe a lot to Pullela Gopichand's individual initiatives, what will get clearer as time rolls by is that the intermediate stage in a sportsperson's life between the big league and the somewhat advanced preparatory

rural or suburban obscurity which is romanticised and junked almost simultaneously and then switching on the hype machine. A certain segment of the media then takes

akin to Man's first lunar landing.

But the enduring emblematic presences in global sport are not Indians, says the septuagenarian. Priorities have changed. According to him, India today has a smattering of diversely gifted youngsters, some of whom are sharpshooters, who could have done without the fast-tracking that might eventually hurt them.

"One aspect of the matter is our basic unfamiliarity with the ways of the world," he says, adding. "Phased growth

is better than fast-forward planning. Yes, our hinterland is often inadequately equipped but that's reality that can and should be altered. Sergei Bubka didn't always rush to train in Moscow.

The emphasis should be more on producing results than staying in the eye of the people. Sponsorships should be for organisers to try for and clinch. If an athlete is spending his, or her, time looking for money to go abroad for real or imaginary gains in expectations of a perform-