



NAIDU DARES JAGAN
TO DISSOLVE
ANDHRA ASSEMBLY

P4



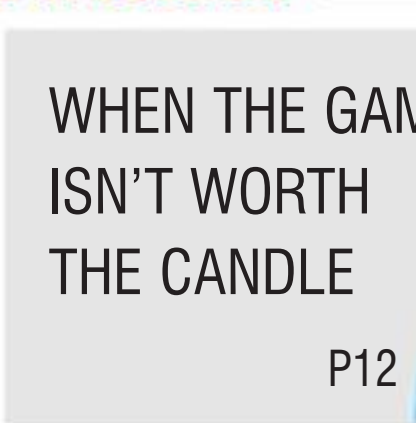
DIGVIJAYA ASKS
PM TO DEFER RAM
TEMPLE CEREMONY

P5



MICROSOFT TO
CONTINUE TALKS
TO BUY TIKTOK

P10



WHEN THE GAME
ISN'T WORTH
THE CANDLE

P12

WEATHER

Partly cloudy sky. Light rain/thunder-showers. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 38 and 28 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: Nil

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 82% Min: 61%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 37.4°C (+3) Min: 28.4°C (+1)

SUN RISES 05:45 hrs SUN SETS 19:10 hrs

MOON RISES 19:57 hrs MOON SETS 07:02 hrs

THUMBNAILED



Covid-19 warriors being honoured to mark Raksha Bandhan at Ballygunge area in Kolkata on Monday.

SNS

Amar Singh cremated: Rajya Sabha member Amar Singh was cremated at the Chhatrapur crematorium in New Delhi in the presence of family members and relatives on Monday. The last rites took place around 11:30 am. His two daughters consigned his mortal remains to flames. His wife Pankaja Singh was present there. Due to Covid-19 protocols, Singh's last rites were performed in the presence of a limited number of people. The 64-year-old died on Saturday in Singapore.

Manufacturing activity contracts: India's manufacturing sector activity contracted at a slightly faster pace in July as demand conditions remained subdued amid prolonged closures, following which firms reduced both staff numbers as well as purchasing activity, a monthly survey said on Monday. The headline seasonally adjusted IHS Markit India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) stood at 46 in July, down from 47.2 in June. This is the fourth straight month of contraction for the Indian manufacturing sector.

P8

WB: Lockdown dates tweaked yet again

Opp slams multiple revisions accusing Bengal govt of 'appeasement'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 3 AUGUST

Within five days, Bengal government yet again revised the dates for a bi-weekly complete lockdown in the state to tackle the Covid pandemic and finally decided to enforce it on seven days in August - 5 (Wednesday), 8 (Saturday), 20 (Thursday), 21 (Friday), 27 (Thursday), 28 (Friday) and 31 (Monday).

"Several requests and appeals have been received from different quarters to relax complete lockdown on certain days which are coinciding with some festivals and local community-based customs," stated a notification issued by the state chief secretary Rajiva Sinha this evening.

"Now, given the requests received and in due consideration of the public sentiment, in partial modification of aforesaid order, it is hereby informed that the statewide complete lockdown shall now be observed on the following days: Wednesday 5 August; Saturday 8 August; Thursday 20 August; Friday 21 August; Friday 28 August and Monday 31 August," the order further added.

On 29 July, the state government had revised dates for the complete lockdown three times in six hours and ultimately decided to enforce it on seven different days in August - 5, 8, 16, 17, 23, 24 and 31. It may be recalled here that chief minister Mamata Banerjee had held two different press conferences on Tuesday to announce the lockdown dates and had said that complete lockdown would be enforced on nine days. However, at around 10 p.m. on Tuesday, the state home department



Kolkata Police personnel during a free mask distribution event in Kolkata on Monday.

BISWAJIT GHOSHAL

21 August; Thursday 27 August; Friday 28 August and Monday 31 August," the order further added.

On 29 July, the state government had revised dates for the complete lockdown three times in six hours and ultimately decided to enforce it on seven different days in August - 5, 8, 16, 17, 23, 24 and 31.

It may be recalled here that chief minister Mamata Banerjee had held two different press conferences on Tuesday to announce the lockdown dates and had said that complete lockdown would be enforced on nine days. However, at around 10 p.m. on Tuesday, the state home department

tweeted that the lockdown will be on seven days instead of nine following "requests from several quarters".

The multiple revisions have already attracted criticism from the Opposition parties who had accused the state government of "appeasement" and "incompetence."

According to sources, the state government was requested not to enforce the lockdown on 16, 17, 23 and 24 August as Parsi New Year is on 16 August and a host of other festivals including Manasa Puja that is observed grandly in Bankura, Purulia, Jhargram and Midnapore and a festival of Marwaris coin-



**FINAL DATES OF
LOCKDOWN IN AUGUST**
5 August (Wednesday)
8 August (Saturday)
20 August (Thursday)
21 August (Friday)
27 August (Thursday)
28 August (Friday)
31 August (Monday)

cide on these days.

Only the essential services will be allowed during the lockdown along with medicine outlets and petrol pumps. All the other shops, government and private offices, commercial establishments and public and private transport will remain closed on the lockdown days. Domestic flight operations from Kolkata airport and long-distance trains would remain suspended on these days.

Fifty three people died due to Covid-19 in the last 24 hours which is the highest single-day death that has been recorded in the state till now while 2,716 fresh cases were recorded today.

DCGI nod to Serum Inst. for phases 2 & 3 Oxford vaccine trials

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 3 AUGUST

The Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) has given nod to the Serum Institute of India for conducting phase 2 and 3 human clinical trials of the Oxford University's Covid-19 vaccine candidate in the

country, according to the Health Ministry.

Government officials said that DCGI Dr V G Soman granted the approval late Sunday night after a thorough evaluation based on the recommendations of the Subject Expert Committee (SEC) on Covid-19.

"The firm has to submit safety data, evaluated by the Data Safety Monitoring Board (DSMB), to the CDSCO before proceeding to phase 3 clinical trials," a senior official said, referring to the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO).

As per the study design, each subject will be administered two doses of the vaccine four weeks apart (first dose on day one and second dose on day 29) following which the safety and immunogenicity will be assessed at pre-defined intervals," the official said.

Rhea Chakraborty not missing, hasn't got summons from Bihar cops: Lawyer

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 3 AUGUST

Actor Rhea Chakraborty's advocate on Monday refuted Bihar Police's claim that she was "missing", and said till date she has not received any summons from them in connection with the case of actor-friend Sushant Singh Rajput's death.

The Bihar Police last week lodged an FIR against Rhea Chakraborty for allegedly abetting Rajput's suicide.

The complaint was filed by Rajput's father K K Singh against Chakraborty and other members of her family.

The Bihar Police earlier said their team had failed to locate Chakraborty.

However, her advocate Satish Maneshinde in a statement said, "The contention



of Bihar police that Rhea Chakraborty is missing is not correct. Till today, no notice or summons has been received by her from the Bihar police."

Chakraborty's statement has already been recorded by the Mumbai Police, Maneshinde said.

"She has cooperated with the police as and when called, the statement said. Maneshinde in the state-

ment reiterated that the Bihar Police do not have jurisdiction to probe the case and hence, Chakraborty has filed a petition in the Supreme Court seeking transfer of the case to Mumbai.

Rajput, 34, was found hanging at his apartment in suburban Bandra on 14 June.

Mumbai Police had registered an Accidental Death Report (ADR) and an investigation is underway in the case.

Till now, the Mumbai Police have recorded statements of 56 people, including Rajput's sisters, Chakraborty and some other film personalities.

A Bihar Police team is also in Mumbai for probing the 'abetment to suicide' case on the basis of a complaint filed by the late actor's father in Patna.

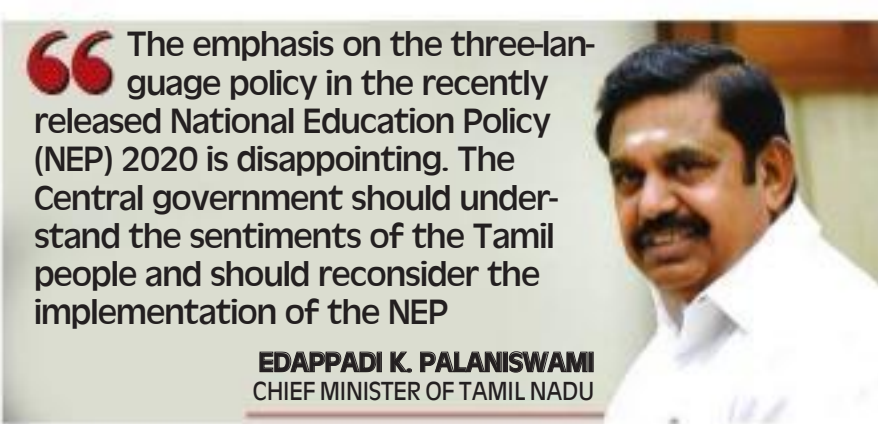
Will stick to two-language policy: TN CM

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHENNAI, 3 AUGUST

A rare political bonhomie was witnessed in Tamil Nadu with chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami opposing the three language policy in the new education policy 2020 launched by the Central government, which has been vehemently opposed by all the Opposition parties in the state, including DMK.

Immediately after Palaniswami said that the two-language policy would continue to be followed in schools in the state, M K Stalin, Opposition leader came forward to thank him for the stance taken.

Palaniswami added that the emphasis on the three-language policy in the recently released National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is disappointing and the three



“The emphasis on the three-language policy in the recently released National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is disappointing. The Central government should understand the sentiments of the Tamil people and should reconsider the implementation of the NEP

EDAPPADI K. PALANISWAMI
CHIEF MINISTER OF TAMIL NADU

language policy mentioned in the policy will not be implemented in the state.

In a statement released here after a meeting this morning with ministers and senior officials, he said the Central government should understand the sentiments of the Tamil people and should reconsider the implementation of the NEP.

The statement elaborated Tamil Nadu's journey with the two-language policy and the various strong steps taken

by the previous governments and chief ministers to remain firm in deciding to follow the policy.

He said that in 1965 when the then-Congress government at the Centre attempted to change the official communication language to Hindi, intense protests broke out across Tamil Nadu opposing this move.

He also pointed out that then chief minister C N Annadurai had passed a resolution in the Tamil Nadu Leg-

islative Assembly in 1968 to follow only the two-language policy in schools, thus teaching only English and Tamil.

He added that chief ministers MG Ramachandran and Jayalalithaa had opposed the imposition of Hindi in Tamil Nadu over the years.

"The current government which follows the footsteps of these great leaders had strongly opposed the three-language policy when the draft of the National Education Policy was released.

"Moreover, as far as Tamil Nadu is concerned, I had also written to the Prime Minister on 26.6.2019 saying that we will follow only two-language policy in the state," Palaniswami pointed out.

He also said that this was reiterated in his 2019's Independence Day speech and in various debates in the Legislative Assembly since then.

Prasad self-isolates, had met Amit Shah on Saturday evening

NEW DELHI, 3 AUGUST

IT and Communications and Law minister Ravi Shankar Prasad on Monday said he has gone into self-isolation for a few days as per protocol, since he had met Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday evening.

Shah, on Sunday, had said he had tested positive for coronavirus and was getting admitted to a hospital following the advice of doctors. Prasad tweeted on Monday that he has isolated himself at home.

"Friends! I'm absolutely fine. To follow protocol I hv isolated myself at home for few days as I had met Amit Shah Ji on Saturday for n official meeting. I'm working from home & following daily routine of Yoga & exercise," he tweeted.

A source said Prasad does not have any symptoms.

PTI

LAC standoff: India insists on Chinese withdrawal from friction points at fifth military-level meeting

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 3 AUGUST

India is learnt to have insisted on disengagement from Pangong Tso Lake area and other friction points during the fifth round of Corps Commander-level talks with China on ending the current military standoff between the two countries in eastern Ladakh.

The talks, which began at 11:30 hrs on Sunday at Moldo on the Chinese side of the LAC, lasted nearly ten hours.

The Indian side was led by 14 Corps commander Lt Gen Harinder Singh and the Chinese side was headed by South Xinjiang Military District chief Maj Gen Liu Lin.



While there was no official word available on the meeting, sources said the Indian side made it clear to the Chinese side that disengagement and de-escalation was necessary for the restoration of peace and tranquility in India-China border areas.

This came after China not showed any signs of pulling back from the friction points, despite both countries agreeing on disengagement terms.

While the Pangong Tso Lake area remains a major sticking point, the other three friction areas are Depsang, Gogra-Hot

Spring and the Galwan Valley, where a violent clash took place between the troops of the two countries on 15 June, resulting in the death of 20 Indian soldiers and an unspecified number of casualties on the Chinese side.

The two generals are understood to have deliberated on the prevailing situation.

The Indian side is believed to have told the Chinese side that it must implement in letter and spirit various agreements and protocols and restore the status quo ante that existed in early May.

The meeting took place amid reports that Beijing has started troop and material build-up in depth areas across the 3,488-

km LAC. The Chinese side has started troop, artillery and armour build-up in three sectors of the LAC - western (Ladakh), middle (Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh) and eastern (Sikkim, Arunachal).

Since the PLA troops are not moving back as per the consensus, the Indian Army has kicked off the massive logistical exercise for advance winter stocking with rations, specialised clothing, prefabricated shelters, Arctic tents and other equipment to maintain. India has deployed over 35,000 troops in Ladakh.

The last four rounds of talks between the two generals were held on 6, 22 and 30 June and 14 July.

It's Lord Ram's will that I attend bhoomi puja : Iqbal Ansari

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
AYODHYA (UP), 3 AUGUST

Iqbal Ansari, who was a litigant in the Ayodhya land dispute case, has decided to gift a 'Ram nam' stole and a copy of the *Ram-charitmanast* to Prime Minister Narendra Modi when he attends the *bhoomi puja* ceremony for the Ram temple here on Wednesday.

"Yes, I have received the invitation from Shri Ram Jannabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust for the bhoomi puja ceremony. I will certainly attend it. The dispute is over now after the court's verdict," Ansari, 69, said.

"Our Prime Minister is coming. I will meet him and give him a Ramnam stole (with Ram's name written on it) and *Ramcharitmanas* as a present," Ansari said.

His father Hashim Ansari, the oldest litigant in the Babari Masjid-Ram Jannabhoomi land dispute case, died at the age of 95 in 2016 after which the son started pursuing the case in the court.

Talking about Wednesday's ground-breaking ceremony to mark the beginning of the construction of Ram temple here, Ansari said, "I belong to Ayodhya. All this (temple's construction) will change the fate of Ayodhya."

He further said, "I respect sadhus and saints. I am happy to have received the invitation for the ceremony. I think it is Lord Ram's will that I attend it."

When asked what he would have done had the court decided the case in his favour, Ansari said he had wanted the construction of a school and a hospital on the disputed land.

"I feel the city needs development. The future of our children should be secure and they should get employment. Dispute in the name of religion should end now and we should let the city witness a new beginning," he said.





We (with Kejriwal) discussed several ongoing & pending projects for development of Delhi & look forward to working together for the welfare of citizens of Delhi

HARDEEP SINGH PURI

UNION HOUSING AND URBAN AFFAIRS MINISTER

Delhi reports 805 fresh Covid cases, 17 deaths

The city's recovered Covid patients tally rose to 1,24,254, while recovery rate mounted to 89.72 pc

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 3 AUGUST

Delhi today recorded 805 more novel coronavirus (Covid-19) cases, which took the city's Covid tally to 1,38,482.

The national capital today recorded 17 deaths due to the coronavirus infection, with its Covid death toll now climbing to 4,021, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

The less-than-1,000 Covid count was reported in Delhi on a day when the total number of Covid tests conducted was 10,133, the bulletin stated.

The number of active coronavirus cases in the city stood at 10,207, down from yesterday's 10,356, while 5,577 patients were getting treatment under home isolation.

The total number of recovered Covid patients in the national capital rose to 1,24,254, with the recovery rate mounting to 89.72 per cent, the bulletin said.

The total number of containment zones in the city was 496.

According to the health bulletin, there were 10,605 vacant hospital beds for Covid patients in Delhi whereas the



People wearing face masks as a preventive measure against Covid-19, in the Capital. SUBRATA DUTTA

total number of hospital beds meant for them was 13,578. The number of vacant beds in the dedicated Covid care centres was 5,971 and the number of such beds in the dedicated Covid health centres was 396.

Delhi had yesterday recorded 15 deaths due to the novel coronavirus infection, which was the lowest Covid fatalities figure reported in the national capital in a single day since 1 July. The city had

reported 961 fresh coronavirus cases yesterday.

The total number of recovered Covid patients in Delhi was reported to be 1,23,317 yesterday while the recovery rate then stood at 89.56 per cent.

Commenting on yesterday's coronavirus figures of Delhi, chief minister Arvind Kejriwal had said: "Deaths in Delhi come down to 15. Less than 1000 cases. Let's all keep working hard to ensure that

the downward trend continues."

On 26 July, Delhi reportedly recorded 21 deaths due to Covid, which was the previous lowest Covid fatality count in the city since 1 July. The corresponding figures on successive days were reported to be 27 July (26), 28 July (28), 29 July (25), 30 July (29), 31 July (27) and 1 August (26). On 23 June, the city had recorded the highest single-day spike of 3,947 coron-

avirus cases so far.

The Delhi government reportedly recorded 613 Covid cases on 27 July - the lowest Covid count in the last two months. It, however, rose to 1,056 the next day and dipped to 1,035 on 29 July only to rise to 1,093 and 1,195 on 30 and 31 July respectively.

The Kejriwal government has been asserting that a multi-pronged strategy of aggressive testing, home isolation and other factors has helped keep the Covid cases from surging in the way they did in June.

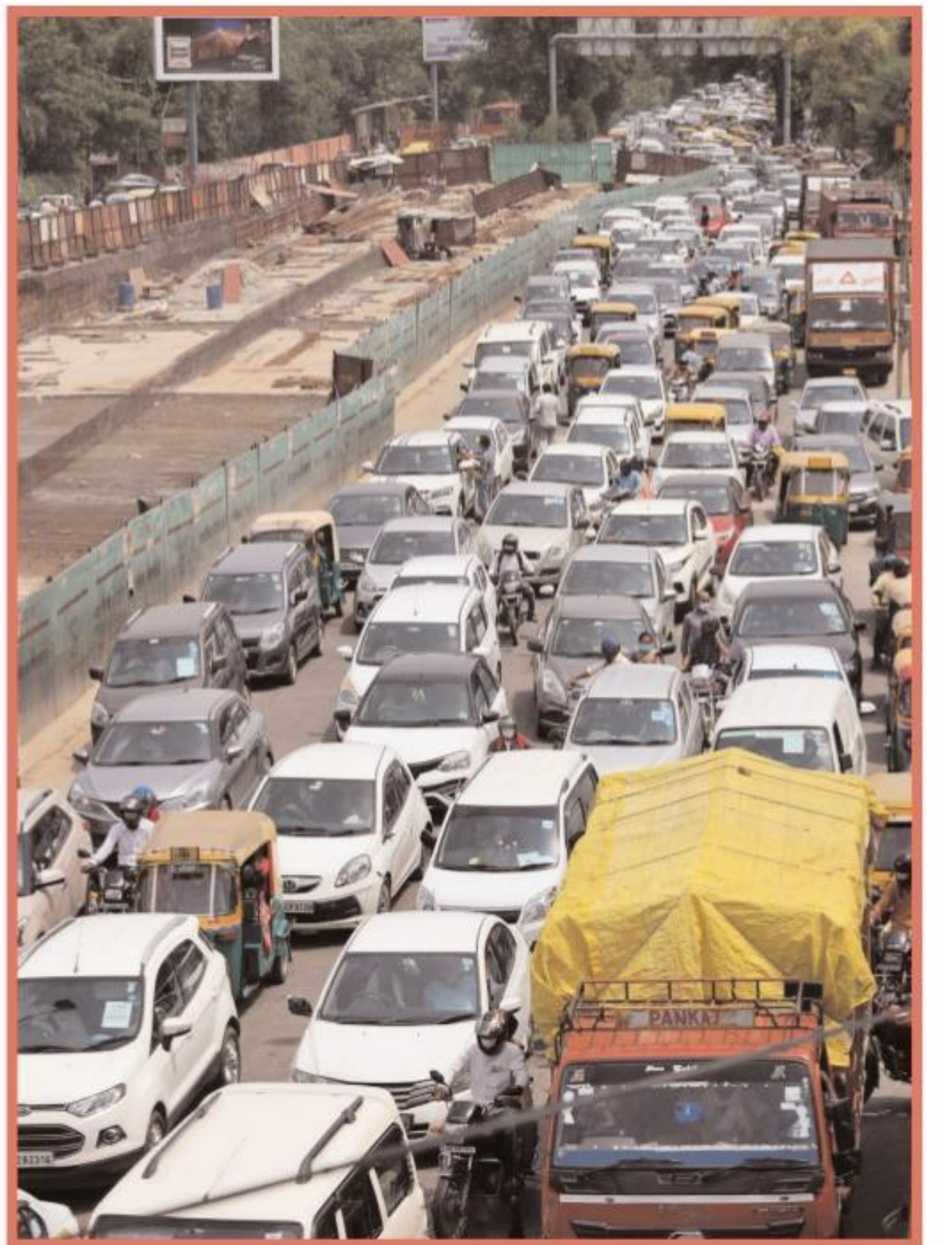
CM Kejriwal has, however, asked Delhiites not to be complacent and take adequate precautions against the Covid pandemic.

Meanwhile, the fresh sero-prevalence survey in the national capital, which began on 1 August, would continue till 7 August.

The serosurvey is being undertaken for a comprehensive assessment of the Covid situation in Delhi. The exercise is supposed to cover all 11 districts of Delhi involving various demographic segments.

A sero-prevalence survey involves testing the blood serum of individuals to check for the prevalence of antibodies against infection.

CHOCK-A-BLOCK



A huge traffic jam on the occasion of the Raksha Bandhan festival at Ashram in the Capital on Monday. DEEPAK

Classified

CHANGE OF NAME

I, RAM Pukar Mahto, S/o. late Laxmi Mahto, residing at Buddingbuds Apartment, Heliabattala, Kolkata-700157, vide Affidavit Number 4950 dated 22.07.2020, in Judicial Magistrate, 1st Class Sealdah, declare that Ravikant Raman, Divyanshu and Divyanshu Kumar Mahto are same person. Henceforth my son shall be known as Divyanshu Kumar Mahto.

I, RAM Pukar Mahto, S/o. late Laxmi Mahto, residing at Buddingbuds Apartment, Heliabattala, Kolkata-700157, vide Affidavit Number 4951 dated 22.07.2020 in Judicial Magistrate, 1st Class Sealdah, declare that Kumari Madhuri, Divyani and Divyani Mahto are same person. Henceforth my daughter shall be known as Divyani Mahto for all purposes.

PUBLIC NOTIFICATIONS

ONE OF our clients, Sri Savankar Sen being the pre-

sent owner of All That land measuring about 2 cottahs, 1 chittack and 39 sq.ft. together with two-storied building measuring about 1175 sq.ft. (ground floor measuring about 841 sq.ft. and 1st floor measuring about 334 sq.ft.) standing thereon under Dag No. 1159, R.S. Khatian No. 10 & L.R. Khatian No. 5428, Mouza Rahara, P.S.: Khardah in the District North 24 Parganas presently known and numbered as Municipal Holding No. 15/A, Dakshin Nandan Kanan (As per Deed) & 32/15/A, Nandan Kanan (As per Tax) under Municipal Ward No. 12 within the limits of Khardah Municipality has lost / misplaced of original Prior Deed dated 22.07.1977 registered in the office of ADJR Barrackpore and recorded in its Book No. I, Volume No. 48, Pages 51 to 53, as being No. 2097 for the year 1977 with respect to the 6½ sataks land. The loss / misplacement of the said deed was recorded as GDE No. 724 in the General Diary on 18.07.2020 with Rahara Police Station.

Anybody having any claim, right, title and / or interest in the aforesaid properties / deed should lodge a claim with us within 7 days from this date failing which no such claim shall be entertained.

Supriyo Basu & Associates Advocates
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Date: 01.08.2020

claim, right, title and / or interest in the aforesaid properties / deed should lodge a claim with us within 7 days from this date failing which no such claim shall be entertained.

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Date: 27.07.2020

FOR SALE 5518 water damaged 50 Kg. Dalmia Cement Bags at Kharrapur, Contact: 9831062478. Quotes E-mail: sapan65@yahoo.com Last date: 16.08.2020. R No. 261002574, 9831119525.

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TENDERS

FOR SALE 5518 water damaged 50 Kg. Dalmia Cement Bags at Kharrapur, Contact: 9831062478. Quotes E-mail: sapan65@yahoo.com Last date: 16.08.2020. R No. 261002574, 9831119525.

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Delhi govt to develop software for new rolls for gurdwara polls

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 3 AUGUST

The information technology department of the Delhi government will develop dedicated software for the preparation and customisation of new photo-electoral rolls of gurdwara wards in the national capital for the gurdwara elections in 2021. This is being done following a request to the state government's IT department by the Directorate of Gurdwara Elections.

According to Delhi minister for gurdwara elections, Rajendra Pal Gautam, the Directorate of Gurdwara Elections has also requested the office of the Chief Electoral Officer to help in matching and verifying the data of the electoral rolls of gurdwara wards with the data of state electoral



requirement of the Directorate of Gurdwara Elections. The decision was taken at a meeting held under the chairmanship of the minister, which was held to discuss various issues relating to the conduct of the DSGMC elections and preparation of photo-electoral rolls, the official said.

The official said the Directorate of Gurdwara Elections conducts the DSGMC elections, whose members have a term of four years. The last such elections were held in February 2017. The next elections are to be held in March 2021.

The Directorate of Gurdwara Elections of the Delhi government was established in 1974 by an Act of Parliament called the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Act, 1971, the official added.

The IT department will develop software as per the

City likely to see sultry weather entire week

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 3 AUGUST

The national capital reeled under sultry weather on Monday as rains continued to play truant.

The weather department said, "similar conditions will prevail the entire week, as only scattered light rains are predicted during the period."

The Safdarjung Observatory, which provides representative figures for the city, recorded a maximum of 37.4 degrees Celsius, three notches more than the normal.

The mercury remained between 35 and 38 degrees Celsius at most places.

Humidity levels oscillated between 61 and 82 per cent.

The Safdarjung Observatory has recorded just

The Safdarjung Observatory, which provides representative figures for the city, recorded a maximum of 37.4 degrees Celsius, three notches more than the normal. The mercury remained between 35 and 38 degrees Celsius at most places.

6.7mm rainfall in the last three days against the normal of 28.3 mm -- a deficiency of 76 per cent.

In July, the weather station gauged 236.9 mm precipitation, which was 12 percent more than the normal of 210.6 mm.

The Statesman

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**AIR-SURCHARGE: Kathmandu - Rs. 2, Eastern Region - Re. 1
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A subdued Raksha Bandhan in Capital amid pandemic



The medical personnel celebrate the Raksha Bandhan festival with Covid-affected patients at a Covid care centre at Commonwealth Games Village in the Capital on Monday. DEEPAK

PTI

NEW DELHI, 3 AUGUST

The Raksha Bandhan festivities in the national capital were little subdued this year owing to the coronavirus pandemic, with siblings having to rely on technology to wish each other.

Travelling was not an option this year but it's the bond that matters the most. I ordered rakhi and sweets for my brother and he sent

me gifts. We had a video call with all cousins too, said Sweetie Gaur, a city resident.

Neetu Bhatia was a bit upset as she would have celebrated Rakhi with her cousin after a long time this year, but the pandemic did not let it happen.

"Some differences had cropped up between us over the last few years and we had not celebrated the festival since then. But over the last

year, we resolved our differences and I had planned to surprise him by visiting him this time.

But I could not meet him. I sent him Rakhi and sweets and wished him over phone. Hopefully we will celebrate the festival together next year," she said.

With travel restrictions in place due to the pandemic and apprehensions about going out, Rahul Bhardwaj could not meet his sister who

lives in a different city.

"This is the first time that it has happened but this is the need of the hour. We need to keep ourselves safe and our loved ones safe too, he said.

People also relied on homemade sweets and dishes to celebrate the festival as they were not sure about the quality of sweets available outside.

"The festival was a bit different this year. I got home-

LG, CM greet people on Raksha Bandhan

NEW DELHI, 3 AUGUST

Lieutenant Governor Anil Bajjal and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Monday greeted people on Raksha Bandhan, saying the festival symbolises traditional Indian values and affection between brother and sister.

Extending greetings, LG Anil Bajjal said on this festival, we should once again take a pledge to protect the honour and dignity of women.

He said the festival symbolises eternal love between brother and sister.

In a tweet in Hindi, Kejriwal said, "Hearty congratulations to all the countrymen on pious festival of Raksha Bandhan symbolising affection of brother-sister and Indian Sanskaras".

made barfi for my brothers and did not buy anything from outside. We are also not going anywhere and just spending time with our family," said Shivani Rawat.

Said Nimrat Kaur, We celebrated Rakhi at home only. I made homemade rakhi and sweets were made at home too. After the lockdown was announced, we did not order anything from outside and only groceries have been bought.





Wonder why our Home Minister, when ill, chose not to go to AIIMS but to a private hospital in a neighbouring state

SHASHI THAROOR
SENIOR CONGRESS LEADER

The Statesman
NEW DELHI, TUESDAY 04 AUGUST 2020

HC dismisses petition against GGSIPU's bid to allocate 50 pc PG medical seats to its students

PTI
NEW DELHI, 3 AUGUST

The Delhi High Court has dismissed a petition challenging the decision of Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University (GGSIPU) to reserve 50 per cent state quota of PG medical seats to MBBS graduates from its own colleges.

Justice Jayant Nath said GGSIPU is following the dicta of the Supreme Court in various cases which have approved 'institutional reservation' upto 50 per cent of the post graduate seats.

In view of the stated legal position, this is clearly permissible. The pleas of the petitioners are clearly without merit. There is no merit in the present petition. The same is accordingly dismissed, the court said in its 32-page judgement.

In the petition, various MBBS graduates and stu-



dents from Jamia Hamdard University had challenged the policy of GGSIPU of allocating the entire 50 per cent state quota of post graduate medical college seats to MBBS graduates from colleges affil-

iated only to itself by way of 'Institutional Preference'.

The plea sought direction to the university to amend its admissions guidelines /brochure for academic year 2020-21 without reserving

entire 50 per cent state quota only for graduates of colleges affiliated to itself by way of 'Institutional Preference', as was done in previous academic years and to allow Hamdard institute of

Justice Jayant Nath said GGSIPU is following the dicta of the Supreme Court in various cases which have approved 'institutional reservation' upto 50 per cent of the post graduate seats.

Medical Sciences and Research (HIMSR) MBBS graduates in the state-wise merit list.

The plea, through advocate Samar Bansal, said that admission to PG medical courses in India is made from two sources, 50 per cent seats are filled up on the basis of the marks obtained in NEET in which medical graduates from across the country are eligible to appear and 50 per cent are filled up on the basis of rules to be framed in accor-

dance with the law by the State Government appointed authority limited to students who have appeared in NEET which is also called state quota.

It said this petition relates to 'state quota' and raised the question whether 'Institutional Preference', namely the right of an institution offering postgraduate courses to reserve such seats for undergraduate students from colleges affiliated to itself, can be permitted to be exercised while deciding the manner of allocation of 50 per cent seats of state quota.

Another plea raised by the petitioners was that there is no specific decision taken by the Delhi government regarding the apportionment of the state quota.

It was urged by them that in the absence of a clear statutory stipulation or administrative direction permitting GGSIPU to allocate the entire

state quota to the students of its own university, the same is illegal.

Delhi government standing counsel Ramesh Singh submitted that as per the Constitution, the government has the power to regulate. However, he said this is only an enabling provision and the government is following a 'hands off policy'.

In my opinion, the Government of NCT of Delhi is supporting the action taken by GGSIPU. No fault can be found merely because some formal communication has not been issued by the Government of NCT of Delhi, Justice Nath said.

Advocate T Singhdev, representing the Medical Council of India, said as per the judgement of the Supreme Court it is for the appropriate authority or state to declare the policy and the authority in the present circumstances is GGSIPU.

Kejri gives ₹1 cr cheque to kin of medico who died of Covid

PTI
NEW DELHI, 3 AUGUST

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal met with the family members of Joginder Chaudhary, a medical practitioner who died of COVID-19 in the city, and handed over a cheque for Rs 1 crore as financial assistance on Monday.

Chaudhary (27), who worked at the Delhi government-run Baba Saheb Ambedkar Medical College and Hospital (BSAMCH), succumbed to COVID-19 last week.

"Our Corona Warrior Dr Joginder Chaudhary, posted in a Delhi government hospital, served patients by putting his life at stake. Dr Chaudhary passed away recently due to the coronavirus infection. Today, I met with his family members and handed over a cheque for Rs 1 crore as financial assistance. Will help the family in every possible way," Kejriwal said in a tweet Hindi.

Chaudhary tested positive for COVID-19 on June 29.

Doctors are treating patients during the pandemic day and night without caring for their lives and Chaudhary was one such COVID warrior of Delhi, a statement issued by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government said.

The relentless work of the doctors, nurses, sanitation workers and other medical officers have yielded significant results as the number of coronavirus cases is coming down with every passing day, the statement said. The positivity rate of the samples tested and the number of deaths have also come down in Delhi, it added.

Chaudhary was a junior resident and worked on an ad-hoc basis at the BSAMCH since October, 2019. He was first attached to the influenza clinic of the hospital and then at the casualty ward, until he complained of fever on June 23, the statement said.

Himachal to promote eco-tourism

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 3 AUGUST

Himachal Pradesh Forest, Youth Services and Sports Minister Rakesh Pathania on Monday called for tapping the eco-tourism potential to provide pollution-free atmosphere to tourists.

After a meeting with senior officers of the Forest department, Pathania said Himachal Pradesh had a lot of potential for eco-tourism because of its green cover which needed to be tapped in an eco-friendly manner.

"Tourists will be provided with pollution free atmosphere in eco-tourism sites where tents and other eco-friendly activities like use of solar i.e. green energy would be used," he added.

He emphasized that the catchment area treatment activities should be done in such a manner that rain water could be retained for a longer time to increase the

Small water check dams will be constructed in different schemes to check the soil erosion, which is one of the major reasons for the degradation of the forests, Pathania said.

productivity of the land.

"Small water check dams will be constructed in different schemes to check the soil erosion, which is one of the major reasons for the degradation of the forests.

Further, the farmers and local community will be encouraged in these activities which would also provide opportunities of employment," Pathania said.

He further stated that necessary changes will be made in the policy for providing weapons to the field

functionary of the Forest department.

He emphasized that control rooms be established both at headquarter and field level to monitor various activities of the department.

He appreciated the works done by the wildlife wing in controlling the population of monkeys by massive sterilization efforts at different centers.

The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and head of Forest Force Ajay Kumar gave a presentation regarding activities and schemes being implemented by the department. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Wild Life Dr Savita also gave the presentation about wildlife wing of the department.

Additional Chief Secretary Forests, Sanjay Gupta and other senior officers were also present in the meeting.

Air op conducted for rescue of monsoon-hit U'khand villagers

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
DEHRADUN, 3 AUGUST

The air rescue operation was conducted in monsoon-affected areas in Pithoragarh district in Uttarakhand for the third successive day on Monday.

The district administration has so far shifted 120 affected persons to the Baram relief centre and on Monday 9 persons were airlifted and shifted to the relief centre. A critically-ill person was moved from village Bundi to district headquarter Pithoragarh by helicopter.

Continuous search, rescue and relief work is going on in the border area of Pithoragarh district, where 17 persons lost their lives and many others were injured in rain related incidents last month.

The district administration is using a private chopper, provided by the state government,



to ferry relief material in the Monsoon hit villages and to shift affected families to safer locations. This time the Dharchula, Munyari, Bangapani areas were badly hit by heavy rainfall.

Three medical teams are presently camping at Madkot, after completing their

tour of affected areas recently. In a move to restore connectivity, the Border road organization moved material for constructing bailey bridges at Chami and Dugadi. Search and rescue operations continued to find bodies of missing villagers at Samala Gaon. Pithoragarh District Magistrate Vijay

Kumar Jogdande said, "I have asked all the concerned departments to speed up restoration work in the affected villages."

Heavy rainfall created havoc in Pithoragarh district on 20 July this year. Even after many weeks normal life remains affected in many border villages.

Thakur asks officers to ensure proper database of schemes' beneficiaries

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 3 AUGUST

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur on Monday directed for compiling database of beneficiaries of central and state schemes to facilitate the state government in virtual interaction with them during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Addressing the virtual meeting of Deputy Commissioners, SDMs and BDOs, Thakur said effective data-base of beneficiaries of various central and state schemes

must be compiled and made available at a click of a button.

"The complete information regarding beneficiaries of schemes such as Ayushman Bharat, HIMCARE, Ujjwala Yojna, Grihini Suvidha Yojna, pension schemes, PM Kisan Samman Nidhi, housing schemes, beneficiaries of Building and Other Construction Welfare Board, Jan Dhan Yojna, beneficiaries of Chief Minister's Relief Fund and Mukhya Mantri Chikitsa Sahayata Kosh, various other welfare schemes being

implemented by Agriculture, Horticulture, Urban Development Departments etc must be compiled so that the same was readily available," he added.

Thakur said the data compiled must have the complete address of the beneficiary, his/her father's name and mobile number etc.

"The data compiled would have to be placed before the Gram Sabha meeting once in a year. Further, the concerned SDMs should hold meetings with all the respective departments at sub divisional level

and retrieve the data on click of button," he said.

The Chief Minister said the Panchayat Secretaries being grass root functionaries should also coordinate with various departments at panchayat level so that data could also be prepared at the panchayat level itself.

"This would facilitate the state government in virtually interacting with the beneficiaries of various schemes during this Covid-19 pandemic when actual interaction was not possible," he added.

Thakur further stated that regular monitoring of data must be done so as to avoid any gap in data compiled and also to weed out wrong entries and this would ensure that fruits of schemes reach to the deserving persons.

Chief Secretary Anil Khachi assured the Chief Minister that compilation of data would be completed within the stipulated period.

Advisor to the Chief Minister R N Batta said that sample proforma would be provided to the officers to facilitate compilation of data.

Efforts on to make HP stray cattle-free: CM



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 3 AUGUST

Efforts are on to make Himachal Pradesh stray cattle-free within one and a half year, said Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur while launching 'Assistance to Gausadan/Gaushala/Cow Sanctuary Scheme' and National Artificial Insemination Programme Phase-II of Animal Husbandry department here today.

The Chief Minister said that under the Assistance to Gausadan/Gaushala/Cow Sanctuary Scheme Rs 500 per cow per month would be provided to all Gausadans/Gaushalas/ cow sanctuaries having 30 or more cattle as maintenance allowance after complete tagging under Information Network for Animal Productivity and Health (INAPH) and National Animal Disease Control Programme (NADCP) as per the Government of India guidelines. He said that these benefits would be extended to cow sanctuaries/Gaushalas established by the government, registered Gausadans and Gaushalas being run by Panchayats, Mahila Mandals, Local Bodies and NGOs etc.

Thakur said that the state government has decided to ensure that no one would be allowed to abandon their cattle.

He said in the very first cabinet meeting of the state government, it was decided that a few apolitical and decision with humane angle be taken and thus the government decided to lower the age limit for availing the benefits of old age pension without any income limit from 80 years to 70 years. The second decision was making provision for providing shelter to stray cattle and levying one rupees cess per bottle of liquor for construction and maintenance of cow sadans, he added.

Thakur said that the government has now decided to levy cess of Rs. 1.50 per cattle of liquor to generate the income and also to develop cow sanctuaries in the state. He said that the government was committed to ensure that not even single cattle was found on the roads for which the collective efforts were required.

He said that under the National Artificial Insemination Programme Phase-II, facility of artificial insemination would be provided to improve the breed of cattle thereby helping the farmers to supplement their income. He said that this would ben-

efit over eight lakh farmers of the State. Thakur also interacted with the farmers and members of Managing Committee of Gausadans and Gaushalas.

Agriculture, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj and Animal Husbandry Minister Virender Kanwar said that it was for the first time the Chief Minister has interacted with cattle rearers of the state. The efforts would be made to bring all the abandoned cattle into Gau Sadans and cow sanctuaries for which active cooperation of every section of the society was required. He said that efforts would also be made for capacity enhancement of the cow sanctuaries in the State.

He said that seven cow sanctuaries were coming up in seven districts of the state which would be made functional at the earliest. He said that the Agriculture department would purchase cow dung from the cow sanctuaries and would be sold to farmers as vermi-compost. The efforts would also be made to plant fodder trees in cow sanctuary areas so that cows could get green fodder. He said that the state government would ensure free vaccination of cattle twice in a year.

HP woman beats disability on road to empowerment

ARCHANA PHULL
SHIMLA, 3 AUGUST

"No. I don't consider myself disabled. I work 24x7 and there is nothing that I can't do. You need spirit, more than anything else, to do any work," said Sudarshana Kumari, 51, from Rait in Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh.

A higher secondary-passed woman from poor background, Sudarshana has a burnt hand (65 per cent disability) and has been in news locally for making pine-needle 'rakhis' this Raksha Bandhan.

The colourful, creative and handmade 'Rakhis' that she quickly tried in July month (after someone gave her the idea) sold like hot cakes, as she got orders from other parts of the country fast, when she displayed them on her facebook page.

While this has been a fit example for the Prime Minister's 'Vocal for Local' campaign, this is just one aspect of her initiative. Her indomitable urge to come out of the vicious cycle of poverty with continuous hard work and struggle over the last two decades is an inspiration for many.

Sudarshana, who got her left hand burnt in childhood, is married to a tea seller, who too is disabled. This compelled her to go out and work



Sudarshana Kumari with her handmade pine-needle rakhis

out a livelihood for herself. From working in a crèche on meagre Rs 400 a month as a part of an NGO named Kangra Mahila Sabha during the last decade to learning Pine needle craft, she has traversed

a long journey to empowerment.

Sudarshana has been training village women in the state through different departments in capacity building workshops she guides the women

A Himachal village woman, who has come to limelight for selling handmade pine-needle 'rakhis', has traversed a long journey towards self-empowerment

Self Help Groups for their financial empowerment, while ensuring that she continues with her own craft work without a break.

She collects Pine needles from the jungle in summer months, washes them, dries them and keeps the stock ready for use.

"I have been making varied products of Pine needles right from handmade cards to baskets, mats, trays and other. I was taking small-small steps every day, but never got much response as I used to sell the stuff locally," she said.

November 2018, she said, brought the turning point in her life. Through some link up in Kangra district, she was picked up for a start up on Pine needle products by the state industries department.

"I was also given Rs one

lakh prize- Hero of the State award-for my idea and work," she shared.

The industries department later helped her exhibit her products in state and outside. "I am getting good financial support in the start up now and am learning to make my products more marketable and viable. I am also working out marketing links and am in the process of online sale of my products, after I get the GST (Good and Services Tax number," she said.

Sudarshana is happy that she is on her path to self dependence and for that she gives credit to her readiness to work in any circumstance. "I have seen much poverty. Everytime my husband fell sick, I had to take money from my relatives. Atleast I will come out of that situation now," she said.

Sudarshana has always been sharing profits with village women she has been associated with in Self Help Groups in Rait by passing them orders of Pine needle products that she gets. "I want to take other women along. People don't have any idea about the situation a woman has to face if the family is poor. They need help like I got," she said.



Efforts are on to make Himachal Pradesh stray cattle-free within one-and-a-half year.

CHIEF MINISTER JAI RAM THAKUR

LAUNCHING 'ASSISTANCE TO GAUSADAN/GAUSHALA/COW SANCTUARY SCHEME'

THUMBNAILS



A health worker wearing PPE suit sits inside a mobile testing bus while he collects a swab sample from a resident for a free Covid-19 test in Hyderabad on Monday. ■ AFP

962 new cases in Kerala: Kerala on Monday reported 962 fresh Covid-19 cases, taking the total number of persons affected with the virus in the state to 26,873. As many as 815 patients have recovered from the disease on the day. Meanwhile, chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Monday admitted there was negligence on the part of all in fighting Covid-19. ■ SNS

Raksha Bandhan: Singer Lata Mangeshkar and spiritual leader Amritanandamayi posted Raksha Bandhan messages for Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday which he said would inspire him and give him strength. ■ PTI

Naidu dares Jagan to dissolve Assembly & seek fresh mandate

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD, 3 AUGUST

Accusing chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy of backstabbing the people of Andhra Pradesh, former chief minister and TDP president N Chandrababu Naidu today issued a 48 hour-long ultimatum and dared him to dissolve the Assembly and seek a fresh mandate on the issue of Amaravati.

The former chief minister launched a scathing attack on the YSRCP government after the government went ahead with its plan to have three capitals for the state instead of the greenfield capital at Amaravati as planned by Naidu. The government will set up the executive capital in Vizag, legislative capital in Amaravati and judicial capital in Kurnool to ensure uniform development of all three regions of the state.

He reminded Reddy that both he and his party leaders had promised the people of AP that Amaravati would continue to be the capital city and it would be fully developed. However, after coming to power the chief minister backstabbed the five crore people of AP by going ahead with his plans to shift the capital.

Comparing it the way Congress had passed the bifurcation Bill in Parliament by shutting down television cameras and closing the doors of Parliament, YSRCP has passed the three capital Bill in the same way and people will punish YSRCP in the same way as Congress.



gress was wiped out from the state.

Naidu dared the chief minister to seek a fresh mandate if he has the guts and full confidence that his three capital plan will be accepted by the people. "If people vote for it and bring back YSRCP to power in the re-election then TDP will humbly accept their mandate and will never raise any dissenting voice against the decision," thundered Naidu.

He went on to add if the chief minister fails to come out with a proper response within 48 hours then TDP along with other Opposition parties will intensify their agitation through legal battles as well as on ground.

YSRCP however, dismissed Naidu's ultimatum saying the YSRCP got the mandate for five years and it is the TDP president who should seek re-election along with his MLAs.

Water resources minister K Anil Kumar Yadav accused Naidu of promoting commercial activity in Amaravati in order to serve the interest of his real estate cohorts.

'No jobs, two-thirds of migrants back in cities'

Study finds over one-fourth of migrants still searching for work in villages

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 3 AUGUST

Nearly two-thirds of migrant workers who had left for their homes due to coronavirus-induced lockdown have either returned to cities or wish to do so in the absence of skilled employment in villages, according to a study that surveyed 4,835 households across 48 districts in 11 states between 24 June and 8 July.

The collaborative study on "How is the Hinterland Unlocking" was carried out by the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (India), Action for Social Advancement, Grameen Sahara, i-Saksham, PRADAN, SAATHI-UP, SeSTA, Seva Mandir and Transform Rural India Foundation and Sambodhi.

The study found that 29 per cent of migrants who had left for their villages are now back in cities, while 45 per cent want to return.

"Absence of skilled employment in villages is reflected in the fact that nearly two-thirds of the returned migrants have either migrated again or wish to do so," it said.

The study also found that migrants who returned



were engaged mainly in labour work in villages, more than 80 per cent of them.

"More than one-fourth of the migrant workers are still searching for work in villages," it said.

According to the survey, one in every four households is thinking of taking their child out of school (24 per cent).

"Though distress is still considerable, structural changes are not yet visible and the health risk of Covid-19 in rural India is rising," the survey warned.

The study found that 43 per cent of households still reported a reduction in meals, while 55 per cent said they have reduced the meal items.

However, it said, there was a "marked improvement" in food intake in comparison to the lockdown period.

"... it is likely that grain availability through PDS (public distribution system) has helped households improve the consumption as well as reduce the need to buy from the market," it noted.

The study found that about 6 per cent of participants have mortgaged household items, while 15 per cent sold their livestock to cope with financial distress.

With regard to sale of productive assets, the study found that 2 per cent of households have sold dry cattle and milk cattle each.

About 2 per cent have mortgaged their land, while one per cent surveyed households have sold their land.

About 10 per cent of households have borrowed

money from their extended families, while 7 per cent borrowed from money lenders, the study found.

The survey found that women in households where migrant members have returned shouldered more workload compared to other members.

On government schemes, the study found that 71 per cent of households have LPG and 85 per cent of them got it through the 'Ujjwala Yojana'.

"Eighty per cent of Ujjwala beneficiaries have received free refills in the last month (June 2020), while 90 per cent households are eligible for PM-KISAN and 38 per cent of those have received the transfer of Rs 2,000," it said.

The study found that 35 per cent of households have postponed a ceremony and 13 per cent reduced the number of guests instead.

Released at a webinar on Monday, the study was aimed at making an assessment of the effect of the lockdown on rural households.

It focussed mainly on areas of reverse migration, food security, kharif season practices, drudgery faced by the women in households, and borrowing and asset sales.

Karti tests +ve for Covid-19, toll in TN hits 109

CHENNAI, 3 AUGUST

For the first time since the outbreak of Covid-19, Tamil Nadu today recorded 109 deaths in a day, taking the fatality to 4,241. Officials said many of these deaths were due to comorbidities. Meanwhile, Sivaganga MP Karti Chidambaram, son of former Union minister P Chidambaram contracted the virus. Governor Bhawanilal Purohit tested positive for the virus yesterday. His condition is stable.

The state today reported 5,609 cases. With this, the total number of positive cases in Tamil Nadu has touched 2,63,222. Chennai continued its lowest streak of new cases in the recent time with 1,021 fresh cases reported today. According to the daily state health bulletin, the total number of cases in the metropolis now stands at 1,02,985. On the positive side, as many as 5,800 Covid-19 patients were discharged from various hospitals in the state after recovery today. The total number of recoveries has touched 2,02,283.

Karti Chidambaram tweeted he tested positive on Monday. He has mild symptoms and opted to stay in home quarantine and urged everyone who recently came in contact with him to follow medical protocol.

The source of infection for Karti Chidambaram is yet to be ascertained. ■ SNS

WB ATMs face cash crunch due to Covid norms

KOLKATA, 3 AUGUST

Several ATMs in West Bengal are running short of currency as private entities entrusted with the cash-filling task are operating with skeletal staff, sources said on Monday.

Many lenders have outsourced the exercise to such entities, who are responsible for the maintenance and operation of ATMs in the state, they said.

West Bengal convenor of All India Bank Officers Confederation (AIBOC) Sanjay Das said these private companies generally withdraw money from chests every Friday, since banks in the state are shut on Saturday and Sunday.

"I visited two ATMs near my place on Monday morning, and both were dry. Many in the neighbourhood, too, complained about it. Today being Rakhi, I had planned a feast for my brother, but with the little cash I had, it could not materialise," said Ananya Das-



gupta, a resident of Jadavpur.

Owing to COVID-19 protocols and restrictions, these entities are operating with minuscule staff and are closed on weekends, resulting in delays in cash-filling, the sources said.

"But, they are trying to refill cash in all the ATMs," Das said. He also said all on-site ATMs within bank premises have not gone dry, as cash-filling in such machines is taken care of by the lenders and not third parties. ■ SNS&PTI

Covid slowdown: Scientists warn against laxity

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 3 AUGUST

The R-value, or reproductive number, for Covid-19 has fallen below one in Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai, indicating a slowdown in the spread of the disease in three of India's biggest cities, according to a recent study.

As experts sound a note of caution against the temptation to lower the guard and warn that any laxity could send the numbers spiralling, a modelling study published in the journal Statistics & Applications found the current R-value for Delhi is 0.66 while it is 0.81 for Mumbai and 0.86 for Chennai, lower than the national average of 1.16.

R-value is the number of people getting infected by an already infected person on an average. Andhra Pradesh has the highest R-value of 1.48 in the country right now.

The pandemic could resurface if we are not vigilant and relax our precautions.

Will soon get back to work after recovery, no need to worry: BSY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BENGALURU, 3 AUGUST

Karnataka chief minister B S Yediyurappa, currently undergoing treatment for Covid-19 at a hospital here, on Monday said there was no need for anyone to worry and he will soon get back to work after recovery.

In a video released by his office, the chief minister said health of the state's people was his priority and requested them to follow measures like maintaining distance and wearing masks to control the spread.

He pointed out that several prominent personalities, like BJP national president J P Nadda, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman, former prime minister H D Deve Gowda, former chief ministers Siddaramaiah and H D Kumaraswamy, and seers of various mutts, have blessed him and wished for his recovery.

The chief minister had last night tweeted informing that he has tested positive for coronavirus and was getting admitted to hospital for treatment.

Manipal Hospital, where Yediyurappa has been admitted, said the chief minister was "doing well" and "clinically stable", and he will be monitored closely by its team.

Yediyurappa said he was in constant touch with officials and there should be no disruption in the government's functioning.

Daughter tests +ve

One of the daughters of CM Yediyurappa has tested positive for Covid-19 and has been admitted to the same hospital, where her father is undergoing treatment for the infection, hospital sources said.

The chief minister's younger son B Y Vijayendra said he was going in for seven days of home quarantine as a precautionary measure.

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 3 AUGUST

Vijayendra was on Friday appointed as the Karnataka BJP vice-president, after which he had tweeted a picture of him seeking the blessing of his father.

6 staff at CM office hit by virus

Six employees at Yediyurappa's office have tested positive for Covid-19, official sources said on Monday. They included a gunman, a driver, and house-keeping staff. After the CM tested positive, his office and residence were sanitised. Besides, contact tracing was done during which the six of his staff members were confirmed to have contracted the virus, the sources said.

However, Governor Vajubhai Vala and home minister Basavaraj Bommai, whom the CM met on 31 July, have tested negative.

Hindu sentiments on Ram Temple shouldn't be ignored: Ghosh

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 3 AUGUST

State BJP president Dilip Ghosh on Monday appealed the TMC government to withdraw its decision on lockdown on 5 August, the day scheduled for 'bhoomi puja' (groundbreaking ceremony) at Ayodhya for the Ram temple, and said the decision reflects the ruling party's strategy to turn "West Bengal into Bangladesh".

"If dates of the lockdown could be changed keeping in mind the Eid festival on 1 August, then why can't the same be done on August 5 keeping in mind celebrations for the Ram temple 'bhoomi puja' across the country," he questioned.

"We had no problem with state government changing dates for the lockdown due to the Eid festival. Similarly the sentiment of the Hindus over the construction of Ram Mandir should not be ignored," Ghosh said.

"A lockdown on 5 August will not allow a suitable atmosphere for those who want to celebrate the historic day of bhoomi puja for the Ram Mandir at Ayodhya," the BJP leader said. The TMC leadership termed BJP's assertion as "baseless" and urged it to refrain from communal politics amid the COVID-19.

"Everyone should keep in mind that the COVID-19 pandemic has affected Bengal and the entire country. This is not a time to pursue communal politics.

In Bengal, we have witnessed harmony and brotherhood among all religions and cultures for decades; we should not spoil it," TMC senior leader and minister Firhad Hakim said.

The 5 August ceremony will mark the beginning of the construction of Ram temple after a decades-long title suit over the site at Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh was settled by Supreme Court in November 2019.

'Only symptomatic flyers to be tested at Kolkata, Siliguri airports'



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 3 AUGUST

The Airports Authority of India (AAI) has issued revised protocols for passenger handling operations at Kolkata and Bagdogra airport where though thermal screening is mandatory for all passengers, the Covid-19 tests will be done only on symptomatic passengers.

With administrative decisions undergoing abrupt changes in this pandemic period to meet the emerging challenges as per circumstances, the Covid protocols too are being updated for airports in handling passenger flight operations.

The AAI has issued revised Covid protocols for passenger handling operations at both Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose

International (NSCBI) airport in Kolkata and the Bagdogra airport at Siliguri.

The protocols, under 'Health Screening' stated that thermal screening shall be done for all passengers while only symptomatic passengers shall be taken to the nearest facility for Covid-19 tests. The quarantine rules advise 14 days of self-monitoring for all passengers while for symptomatic passengers, the health authorities will decide the quarantine requirement on cases basis. The set of rules under 'Passenger Obligations' include passengers must download 'Aarogya Setu' app while they must fill up self-declaration form using 'Sandhane' app developed by health department of West Bengal.

Protocols mentioned under

'Airlines Obligation' include submission of health declaration forms by airlines to state health authority on a daily basis. Finally, the AAI, under category 'Airport/State obligation', stated the declaration forms are to be taken from arriving passengers.

The West Bengal government has taken number of steps in recent times to curb spread of Covid-19, one of which is to stop passenger flights to Kolkata airport from cities that have large number of Covid-19 cases. Flights have been restricted to Kolkata airport from Delhi, Mumbai, Pune, Nagpur, Chennai and Ahmedabad till 15 August. Simultaneously, on all bi-weekly lockdowns till 31 August, the Kolkata airport will remain non-functional to all passenger flights.

Draft Defence Policy lays emphasis on self-reliance, exports

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 3 AUGUST

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) has formulated a draft Defence Production and Export Promotion Policy 2020 (DPEPP 2020) in order to provide an impetus to self-reliance in defence manufacturing and to position India amongst the world's leading countries in defence and aerospace sectors.

The DPEPP 2020 is envisaged as an overarching guiding document of MoD to provide a focused, structured and significant thrust to defence production capabilities of the country for self-reliance and exports, an official release today said.

The policy has laid out following goals and objectives:

■ To achieve a turnover of Rs 1,75,000 crore (\$25Bn), including export of Rs 35,000 crore (\$5 billion), in aerospace and defence goods and services by 2025.

■ To develop a dynamic, robust and competitive defence industry, including aerospace and naval shipbuilding industry to cater to the needs of armed forces with quality products.

■ To reduce depen-

The DPEPP 2020 is envisaged as MoD's overarching guiding document to provide a focused, structured and significant thrust to defence production capabilities for self-reliance and exports

dence on imports and take forward 'Make in India' initiatives through domestic design and development.

■ To promote export of defence products and become part of the global defence value chains.

■ To create an environment that encourages R&D, rewards innovation, creates Indian IP ownership and promotes a robust and self-reliant defence industry.

The Policy brings out multiple strategies under focus areas, including procurement reforms; indigenisation and support to MSMEs/startups; optimise resource allocation; investment promotion; FDI & ease of doing business; innovation and R&D; DPSUs and OFB; and quality assurance & testing infrastructure; export promotion.

LOW-KEY 'RAKHI'



People maintain social distancing as they attend a function organised by the Bengal government to celebrate the festival of Raksha Bandhan, in Kolkata on Monday. ■ AFP

IIT-KGP researchers awarded for generating power from wet clothes

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KOLKATA, 3 AUGUST

A group of researchers from IIT Kharagpur has been conferred the 'Gandhian Young Technological Innovation Awards 2020' for developing a mechanism for generating electricity from wet clothes left under sunlight to dry, a spokesperson of the institute said on Monday. Another team was separately granted the same award for addressing the problem of energy conservation and thermal management in wearable and flexible electronic devices. Congratulating the researchers, IIT Kharagpur Director Prof Viren-

dra Tewari said, "We still have sectors which need sourcing and efficient management of clean energy to meet our augmented power requirements, even in the remote areas." The 'Gandhian Young Technological Innovation (GYTI) Awards' was instituted by the Society for Research and Initiatives for Sustainable Technologies and Institution (SRISTI), a voluntary organization.

SRISTI said that GYTI Award celebrates the spirit of student innovation in all the fields of engineering, science, technology and design through extremely affordable/frugal solution or the ones pushing the technological edge.

The spokesperson said that Prof Suman Chakraborty, Prof Partha Saha and Dr Aditya Bandopadhyay from the Department of Mechanical Engineering have been awarded for their work. "Electrical power generation from wet textile," Prof Sunando Dasgupta and his team from the Department of Chemical Engineering have also been awarded for their work. "Smart, flexible, and multifunctional thermal and energy management systems for next-generation electronic devices." The device has been tested in a remote village where around 50 wet clothes were left for drying by washermen.



VHP will now work towards a 'Ram Rajya' and particularly focus on uplifting SC and ST communities

VISHVA HINDU PARISHAD WORKING PRESIDENT ALOK KUMAR
ON BRINGING ABOUT A HARMONIOUS SOCIETY

The Statesman
NEW DELHI, TUESDAY 04 AUGUST 2020

05

THUMBNAILS



A waiter carries 'Covid Curry' and 'Mask Naan' – two Covid-19 themed dishes – at a restaurant in Jodhpur on Monday. AFP

Dead lizard in bowl of sambar: A customer reportedly found a dead lizard in a bowl of sambar at a South Indian restaurant in Cornaught Place in New Delhi police said on Monday. An FIR has been registered against the restaurant and the matter is under investigation. The police have asked for CCTV footage from the restaurant along with details of the cook and ingredients used in making the food item (sambar) as well as the restaurant license. PTI

Ahmedabad top cop: Sanjay Srivastava, a 1987 batch IPS officer, took charge as Ahmedabad police commissioner on Monday from Ashish Bhatia who has been elevated to the post of Gujarat DCP. PTI

Decline in J&K violence: Fall in stone-pelting incidents and continued crackdown on separatist leaders in J&K are key factors of a decreasing trend of violence since the abrogation of Article 370 last year, officials said on Monday. PTI

Sanskrit Day: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday thanked everyone involved in promoting, teaching and using Sanskrit language. Sanskrit Day is observed every year on the full moon day of the Hindu calendar month of Shravan. PTI

SAD blames ruling Cong for hooch tragedy

CHANDIGARH, 3 AUGUST

With four Punjab ministers accusing the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) of taking political mileage over the hooch tragedy in the state which has claimed 101 lives, the SAD on Monday said the Congress government had gone into panic mode as the roots of the hooch tragedy led to the chief minister's office.

SAD spokesman Daljit Singh Cheema said four ministers have been put into service to launch a false, baseless and politically motivated counter attack on the SAD instead of taking any effort to arrest the Congress legislators and distillery owners associated with the Congress who were responsible for the death of over 100 persons.

"No amount of damage control by even the entire cabinet can save Congressmen who have played with the lives of innocent people by supplying poisonous alcohol to them," the SAD leader said. He said the Congress government was compounding its sin by trying to be brazen about the man made tragedy inflicted by it on Punjabis.

The SAD leader asked the four ministers who were trying to defend murderers to tell Punjabis why the Congress government did not take action against two Congress legislators who were behind the illegal distillery cum bottling plant unearthed in Patiala. He said if stern action had been taken against the legislators, over 101 lives would have been saved. "Instead of doing this the government is still trying to protect the legislators by refusing to transfer files of the case to the Enforcement Directorate," Cheema added.

Asking the Congress ministers not to try to divert attention from the hooch tragedy with wild allegations, the SAD leader said they should tell why the money made from the sale of illegal liquor had not been recovered till yet. SNS

Digvijaya asks PM to defer Ram temple event

Says 5 August is an 'inauspicious' date as many BJP leaders, home minister and several priests of the temple have tested Covid positive

SNS & PTI

BHOPAL/ MUMBAI, 3 AUGUST

Congress Rajya Sabha member Digvijaya Singh has alleged that 5 August is an 'inauspicious' date for the foundation stone-laying ceremony of Ram Temple at Ayodhya and as a result many BJP leaders including home minister Amit Shah and several priests of the temple have been infected by Covid-19.

Through several tweets today, Singh claimed that Jagat Guru Shankaracharya Swaroopanand Saraswati has said that 5 August is an inauspicious muhurat for the shilanyas (ground-breaking) ceremony of the Ram Temple and the date has been fixed only for the convenience of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The bhoomi puja of the Ram Temple at Ayodhya is scheduled to be held on 5 August and Modi is expected to attend the ceremony personally.

Singh said that he urges the PM to postpone the foundation stone laying ceremony. The



former MP CM also said that Modi should refrain from allowing his arrogance to turn a long-awaited auspicious occasion into an inauspicious one.

Singh questioned if Modi was above Hindu beliefs and if this was real Hindutva?

The Congress leader also claimed that it was the result of ignoring the tenets of Sanatana Dharma that priests of the Ram Temple became Covid-19 positive, UP minister Kamla Rani Varun died of Covid-19, UP BJP chief tested corona positive, Union Home minister Amit Shah tested corona positive, MP CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan and MP BJP Chief V D Sharma tested corona positive and Karnataka CM tested posi-

tive.

Singh also urged UP CM Yogi Adityanath to advise PM Modi so that better sense prevails on the PM.

Saying that tenets of the Sanatana Dharma were being

Yogi oversees preparations in Ayodhya

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

AYODHYA, 3 AUGUST

Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath on Monday said that the Covid-19 protocol will be strictly followed during the 'bhoomi puja' ceremony for Ram temple and only those invited should come.

The chief minister, who was here to oversee preparations for the 5 August event, said it was a "historic and emotional" moment which will lay the "foundation of a new India".

He also hit out at the Congress, saying those who are making negative com-

ments on the event had tried to create obstacles in the construction of the Ram temple and the people of the country know about them.

"It is not only a historic but also an emotional moment as after 500 years the Ram temple work will start. It will be the foundation of a new India."

"Covid-19 protocol will be strictly followed at the event. As the prime minister will be here representing 135 crore people, I appeal that only those who have been invited should visit Ayodhya. The rest should remain at their respective places," Adityanath said, adding no laxity will be

broken in Yogi's presence, Singh questioned what was compelling Yogi to allow that to happen?

MP CM Chouhan reacted to Singh's comments saying that merely taking the name

allowed. Nearly 200 people have been invited for the ceremony, according to the temple trust.

The chief minister urged the people to light earthen lamps, decorate temples and recite Ramayana in memory of those "who laid down their lives in the temple struggle". For those who are keen to visit Ayodhya, arrangements will be made to bring people from every district once the coronavirus pandemic is over, he said.

The chief minister reached Ayodhya in the afternoon and visited the Ram Janmabhoomi site where the bhoomi puja is to be held.

were today trying to fix the auspicious-inauspicious time for the construction of Lord Rama's Temple. MP Home minister Narettam Mishra also castigated Digvijaya Singh and said history has witnessed that whenever a religious and auspicious event was taking place, demonic powers had tried to stop or disrupt it. Mishra said Singh was acting like those demonic powers through his actions and words.

Mishra retorted that on the one hand former MP CM Kamal Nath was organizing a Sunder Kaand while on the other, Digvijaya Singh was trying to do a lanka kaand.

Nath has organized a Hanuman Chalisa recital event at his home at Bhopal on 4 August, a day before the Ram Temple ceremony at Ayodhya.

Shiv Sena contributes ₹1 crore :

The Shiv Sena has contributed Rs 1 crore for the construction of a Ram temple in Ayodhya ahead of the 'bhoomi puja' scheduled for 5 August as announced by Maharashtra

chief minister and the party president Uddhav Thackeray earlier this year, the party said on Monday.

The amount was transferred to the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust's bank account via real-time gross settlement (RTGS) on 27 July 27, the Sena said on Twitter.

Delhi BJP to organise live telecast of bhoomi puja:

Lighting of 11 lakh earthen lamps, a mega laser show, and live telecast of the ground-breaking ceremony of the Ram temple in Ayodhya through LED screens across the city are some of the events being planned by the Delhi BJP to make the occasion "memorable".

Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta said on Monday that Lord Rama lives in the hearts of crores of people and the BJP has been at the forefront of the movement for construction of his temple in Ayodhya which is why it wants the occasion to be remembered by generations to come.

IMD issues red alert, extremely heavy rain likely in Mumbai

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI, 3 AUGUST

The India Meteorological Department issued a red alert for Mumbai, Thane, Pune, Raigad and Ratnagiri districts in Maharashtra for Tuesday after upgrading its earlier rain forecast from "heavy-very heavy" to "extremely heavy".

An IMD official on Monday said the "extremely heavy" forecast means Mumbai, Raigad, Thane, Pune and Ratnagiri may get more than 204.5 millimetres of rain in a period of 24 hours.

"Mumbai, Thane, Pune would receive extremely heavy

rainfall in isolated places on Tuesday and Wednesday. Raigad has a similar forecast between Monday and Wednesday," he said.

"The probability of the forecast is very likely, which means 51 per cent to 75 per cent of actualisation," the official added.

Neighbouring Palghar district would get heavy to very heavy rains at a few places on Tuesday and the intensity would increase on Wednesday, the IMD said.

The rest of Maharashtra was very likely to get rain and thundershowers in isolated places during this period, the official informed.

Panic as river erodes banks in West Bengal



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

RAIGANJ, 3 AUGUST

Panic spread among residents of Kharasrota village on the banks of the Sui river under the Itahar police station area in North Dinajpur district after the flooded river started eroding land and washed away two houses last night.

Twelve houses have been swept away by the river waters so far this year, villagers there said. "Water in the river has risen and it is flowing very close to the primary school and a temple. The guard wall with boulders on the river banks is needed to protect the village. Both the block and district admin-

istrative officials have remained silent on the matter," a local man said. Residents of Kharasrota village, Keshab Mandal and Rakesh Basak, said the Sui river has gobbled up around 100 houses in the village in the past two decades.

"This year, the waters have already swept away 12 houses. All the families are daily wage earners, and they have now taken shelter in safer places far away from the river. If a guard wall is not built, a government free primary school, a temple and some other houses will be washed away very soon. Residents in our village are worried with the rise in the water level," Mr Mandal said.

MOMENTS OF JOY



On the occasion of Raksha Bandhan, in Chennai on Monday.

AFP

Centre sanctions ₹25 cr for border devp in Ladakh

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU/ NEW DELHI, 3 AUGUST

Amidst the ongoing tension with China, the government has sanctioned a sum of Rs 24.63 crore under the Border Area Development Programme (BADP) for villages along the Indo-China and Indo-Pakistan borders in Ladakh.

The core objective of BADP is to develop border villages situated along Indo-Pak and Indo-China borders with special focus on important sectors like education, health, agriculture, drinking water, handicraft, handloom, power, rural development, roads, and bridges, irrigation canals among others.

It is worth mentioning that the Chinese military has been obstructing development of the border areas of Ladakh. They raise objections and try to create scare among the civilians on this side of the LAC whenever any

development activity is undertaken.

A meeting of senior officers of the Ladakh administration was held on Monday to discuss the priorities for expenditure of the grants.

After going through each and every scheme, chief executive councillor (CEC) Gyal P Wangyal stressed the need for completion of BADP projects timely and directed executing agencies to ensure a maximum result in progress of BADP projects in close coordination with concerned councillors and added that the progress of BADP projects will be reviewed in the first week of September 2020.

Deputy commissioner Leh Sachin Kumar Vaishya asserted that developmental works in the border areas will be taken on priority and therefore stressed on the executing agencies for proper execution and to make every effort for completion of the projects in the same financial

year.

The ECs and Councillors of border areas also gave inputs to make the BADP more result-oriented for the people living along the border. Heads of concerned departments gave a detailed account of the work-done report and the report of ongoing and future plan for completion of the projects.

Left demands release of J&K detainees:

Leaders of five Left parties today demanded that all those detained in Jammu and Kashmir since August 2019 be released, full communications be restored in the former state and free movement of people allowed there.

In a joint statement, the Left leaders said that this was essential for both combating the Covid-19 pandemic effectively and upholding Constitutional guarantees on democratic rights and civil lib-

erties, while providing relief to the beleaguered people.

The leaders said the 5 August marked one year of the abrogation of Article 370, the dissolving of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, and "the caging of the people of J&K." Last year, the Modi Government made many tall promises about what this move would accomplish and how it would benefit India and the people of J&K, the leader said.

But there were warnings also from many that "the Modi regime's tyranny in Kashmir would soon be a blueprint for the whole of India. A year later, the Government's promises stand exposed, betraying the people of J&K who continue to be caged and silenced," the leaders said.

The challenges to the abrogation of Article 370 and 35(A) of the Indian Constitution are still pending before the Supreme Court.

Assam crosses 10,000 active Covid-19 cases

GUWAHATI, 3 AUGUST

Assam continues to report nearly a thousand of Covid-19 cases everyday to increase its total tally to 42,904 till Monday afternoon.

By now 32,384 individuals were discharged from the hospitals after medical interventions and the state has 10,412 active Covid-19 cases. The virus has till date claimed 105 lives in state.

State health minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma informed that 1,178 new Covid-19 cases were reported in the for last 24 hours across Assam, where Guwahati has contributed 268 cases.

He also wished a happy Raksha Bandhan to everyone and expressed happiness that many Covid-19 positive individuals, who were discharged recently, would be able to celebrate the festival in their residences.

Nagaland reports 1,473 active cases: Nagaland reported 194 new Covid-19 cases in the last 24 hours to increase its tally to 2,129 till Monday.

State health minister Pangnyu Phom informed that presently they have 1,473 are active.

About 648 individuals were discharged from health centers after medical attentions and four persons succumbed to Covid-19 in the State.

Mizoram Covid-19 tally 482: Mizoram reported 14 new Covid-19 cases during the last 24 hours to increase its total tally to 482 till Monday.

State chief minister Pu Zoramthanga informed that 258 individuals were discharged from health centers after necessary medical interventions.

The State has presently 224 active Covid-19 cases. SNS

Bihar-Maharashtra tussle deepens in Sushant suicide case

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

PATNA, 3 AUGUST

Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar has reacted angrily to 'forcible quarantine' of an IPS official Binay Tiwari who was sent to Mumbai to probe actor Sushant Singh Rajput suicide case as the continuing tussle between Maharashtra and Bihar deepened further today.

The whole case has got a new twist after the actor's father registered a case with the Patna police last week in connection with the incident even as the Mumbai police was already investigating the case.

"What happened with him (IPS official) is not right. He was only doing his duty. Our DGP will speak to the Maharashtra officials over the issue," the chief minister told newsmen today.

CM's response came after Tiwari was put under 14-day quarantine by the Mumbai police shortly after he had land-



ed there to investigate the case.

What was further humiliating, Tiwari's hand was stamped with quarantine instruction and was also not provided accommodation in the IPS mess.

Bihar DGP Gupteshwar Pandey himself confirmed about such treatments meted to his officer in Mumbai.

"IPS officer Binay Tiwari reached Mumbai today from Patna on official duty but he has been forcibly quarantined by BMC officials at 11 p.m. today. He was not provided accommodation in the IPS mess

Sushant had bipolar disorder, says Mumbai police chief

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI/PATNA, 3 AUGUST

Actor Sushant Singh Rajput was suffering from bipolar disorder, a mental condition characterised by extreme mood swings, at the time of his death, Mumbai police chief Pambir Singh said on Monday amid clamour by Bihar politicians for a CBI probe.

"It was found that the actor had bipolar disorder, and was undergoing treatment and taking medicines for it. What circumstances led to his death is the subject of our investigation," Mumbai police commissioner Singh told a press conference. Singh also said no politician's name has come up

despite request and was staying in a guest house in Goregaon," Pandey tweeted shortly past mid-

during the investigation by Mumbai police.

There is no question of non-cooperation with the Bihar police team which is in the city in connection with the Sushant Singh Rajput death case, Singh said, adding Mumbai police are seeking legal opinion on the matter.

Talking to media, Singh also said no politician's name has come up during the investigation by Mumbai police. There is no question of non-cooperation with the Bihar police team which is in the city in connection with the Sushant Singh Rajput death case, Singh said, adding Mumbai police are seeking legal opinion on the matter.

night on Sunday.

He added that Tiwari can't move anywhere now while he

had been rushed to investigate the Sushant case.

As such, the "turf tussle" between the police of two states began right since a team of Bihar police was rushed to Mumbai last week after a case had been registered with the Rajiv Nagar police station in Patna. TV footages have shown the Bihar police team moving on auto-rickshaw as it was not provided an official vehicle by the Mumbai police. There are already reports of the Mumbai police not cooperating with the Bihar police team over providing important documents.

The tussle took a curious turn when the Malvani police in Mumbai expressed its inability to share the case file related to Disha Salian, Sushant's ex-manager who committed suicide about a week before the actor ended his life. According to reports, the Malvan police told the Bihar police team that the case file had been accidentally deleted from their laptop.

And when the Bihar police

team asked the Malvan police if they could help retrieve the file from the laptop, the latter reportedly shot back, "Why do you want the file?"

Meanwhile the actor's suicide case figured prominently on the last day of the current Bihar assembly held outside the Bihar Assembly building due to the corona panic.

During the session held in a conference hall located near Patna Gandhi Maidan, BJP legislator and Sushant's cousin brother Neeraj Bablu sought for a CBI inquiry into the case.

He received the support from the opposition RJD which demanded that justice be delivered to the actor.

The Congress party also supported the move. Bablu's wife Nutan Singh, a BJP MLC, also raised the issue in the legislative council. Raju Tiwari, an MLA of Ram Vilas Paswans LPJ, and Awadhesh Kumar Singh of the Congress were among others who rose to speak in favor of a CBI inquiry.

Rajput's sister gives him rakhi tribute:

Actor Sushant Singh Rajput's sister Shweta Singh Kirti on Monday remembered the late star on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan and said he will always remain special. Shweta took to Instagram and shared a collage of childhood photographs of Sushant, where the actor is seen surrounded by his four sisters as they tie him rakhi.

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NOTICE

Notice is hereby given, pursuant to Regulation 29 read with Regulation 47 of the SEBI (Listing Regulations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 that a Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Company will be held at the Corporate Office of the Company on 12th August, 2020 at 3.00 PM to take on record the Unaudited Financial Results of the Company for the Quarter ended 30.06.2020.

For **ASHIANA AGRO INDUSTRIES LTD.**
Date: 03.08.2020 54/-
Place: Chennai Company Secretary



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Not unexpected

While the death of more than 100 people after consuming illicit liquor in Punjab is tragic, it was not entirely unexpected. When the World Health Organisation reported a few years ago that per capita liquor consumption in the country had more than doubled from 2.4 litres in 2005 to 5.6 litres in 2016, not far below the global per capita consumption of 6.4 litres, it ought to have alerted policy-makers. After Vietnam, India had recorded the highest increase in liquor consumption. As social habits underwent a major transformation, official data showed that Punjab had the second highest number of deaths from consumption of spurious and poisonous liquor in the country, marginally behind Tamil Nadu, which has more than twice as many people. It was against this backdrop that a lockdown was announced in March, and liquor shops were locked up as sale of alcohol was considered unessential.

Only one state to our knowledge was pragmatic enough to realise that not feeding a habit, even a pernicious one, could have disastrous consequences and allowed shops to open for a few days amid the lockdown. Punjab kept its liquor shops shut for more than 40 days and even when it announced they would be allowed to open in the first week of May, not many did because they were demanding a relaxation in the excise rules with respect to licence fees.

This was a long enough period for illicit distilleries to streamline operations and establish an extensive delivery network. Additionally, like many states, Punjab too levied a Covid cess on alcohol, making illicit liquor seem a more attractive option. For a state that has over the years mastered the art of clandestinely selling intoxicants, transporting and distributing illicit liquor would have proved relatively easy, especially in the absence of competition. Not surprisingly, therefore, the deaths last week were not localised ~ as is often the case with such tragedies ~ but covered three districts, Batala, Amritsar and Tarn Taran.

It is not as if the state's Chief Minister was unaware that his fellow Punjabis favoured a tippie. Perhaps realising this, Punjab in fact was one of the first states to allow home delivery of liquor after the first easing of lockdown restrictions. Where Captain Amarinder Singh and his government erred were in miscalculating the scale of the enterprise that had come up during the first lockdown, and in not anticipating that corrupt excise officials and policemen would by then have joined hands to fine-tune distribution chains for the illicit brew.

Thus, the fuse lit in March caused the explosion in July. It is all very well for the state government to announce ex-gratia of Rs 2 lakh to families of those who died; this is a small price to pay for criminal lapses. But the alacrity with which the authorities claim to have made arrests, and uncovered the trail of production and distribution, tells us how little there was to investigate; seemingly, the trade was an open secret.

Nepal's travails

With Nepal's Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli once again having refused to step down from one of the two positions he holds ~ those of head of government and party chairman ~ the crisis in the Himalayan country has lengthened. On Sunday, Oli told party co-chair Pushpa Kamal Dahal aka Prachanda that he would not do what he had once committed to, and what was a part of the understanding between the two Communist factions when they came together. Until a few days ago, a majority in the nine-member party secretariat were in favour of Oli stepping down from one of the positions. But with Oli engineering the defection of the vice-chair and persuading another powerful member to sit on the fence, the balance has shifted. He now has the support of four members of the secretariat, which means he has forced a stalemate on his rivals. The Prachanda faction for now has the support of a majority in the 44-member Standing Committee and in the 442-member Central committee.

But it remains to be seen if Prachanda and his main supporter Madhav Kumar Nepal can hold their flock together for as long as Oli manages to stall matters, something he has accomplished for weeks. When pushed to the wall, Oli had even threatened to split the unified Communist party. This has left Prachanda scrambling to explain himself to supporters and to convince people in the country that the two Communist groups had come together for a loftier purpose than acquiring power. Oli is reported to have told Prachanda that he will not relent and asked him to do "whatever he can", as bald a political dare as there can be.

Oli's many stalls during the past week have included claiming that he is preoccupied with the coronavirus crisis, even though his government has been widely criticised for botching up superintendence. When things seemed desperate, Oli diverted attention with his grandstanding on a new political map, and by ratcheting up tensions with India. He has even hinted that moves to trim his sails are getting encouragement from India.

Now, Oli has told people that while he is ready to hand over the party chairmanship, he will do so only after the party's general convention. The longer Oli holds on to both positions and the internecine battle continues, the harder it will become for Oli's detractors to claim they are acting in defence of democratic values, and not because they are hungry for power. This seems integral to Oli's calculations. The role of China in the whole affair has also been dubious with Beijing's envoy seeming to operate from behind the scenes to ensure Oli's grip on power is not weakened. Nepal's tryst with democracy hobbles along.

Miles to go...

A major shortcoming of the NEP is that it is a document prepared by academicians that does not focus adequately on how to make education useful for business, industry and society. Ideally, our educational system should turn out well-qualified individuals who would effortlessly slip into their assigned roles. This is the way the education system is designed in most advanced countries



The new National Education Policy (NEP) has been welcomed and castigated in equal measure by commentators along predictable lines. An omnibus document, the National Education Policy 2020, has been designed as a panacea for all ills of the education system, at all levels. The NEP ran into controversy the day its draft was published in May 2019, because the NEP proposed universal teaching of Hindi in lower classes. Hopefully, with the controversy now resolved, the Government can get down to the implementation of the NEP.

The NEP recommends a number of fundamental changes. The 10 + 2 model of secondary education is proposed to be replaced by a 5+3+3+4 model. Under the new dispensation, a child will go to a pre-school/ anganwadi at the age of three years; after three years at the pre-school/anganwadi, the child will go to a primary school for grade 1 and 2. Grades 3 to 5 would be preparatory followed by grades 6 to 8 called the Middle Stage. There would be school examinations in grades 3, 5 and 8. Suffice it to say, that the new system would be the antithesis of the present system which does away with examinations till the board examinations in class ten. Moreover, eleven years of schooling till class eight may test the patience and financial resources of the poor and moderately well-off who want their children to be ready for employment or higher education after twelve years of schooling.

Annual Status of Education Reports (ASER) across the years had pointed out that the educational foundation of most children was extremely weak; most middle school children were unable to do simple arithmetical sums or even read and write in their mother tongues. The NEP proposes pre-schooling, to buttress the educational foundation of learners, but the anganwadis, that are to shoulder the bulk of responsibility for pre-schooling, are ill-equipped for this onerous task.

Anganwadis were established as rural child-care centres under the Integrated Child Development Services programme, primarily to combat child hunger and malnutrition. A typical anganwadi is manned by an Anganwadi Worker (AWW) assisted by an Anganwadi Helper (AWH); while the AWW is paid honorarium of Rs 4,500 per month the AWH is paid Rs 2,500 per month. Anganwadis also provide contra-

ceptive counselling and supply nutrition education and supplementation, immunization, health check-up and referral services and are also used as depots for oral rehydration salts, basic medicines and contraceptives.

Anganwadi workers are not qualified teachers; given the span of their multifarious duties, they may not be able to devote sufficient time to educating children. Privately-run pre-schools are little better; most of them operate out of cramped spaces and have unqualified teachers but still charge a bomb for their services. Looking to the situation on the ground, the NEP should first have provided a road map for rejuvenation of anganwadis and pre-schools before entrusting them with the responsibility of educating young minds.

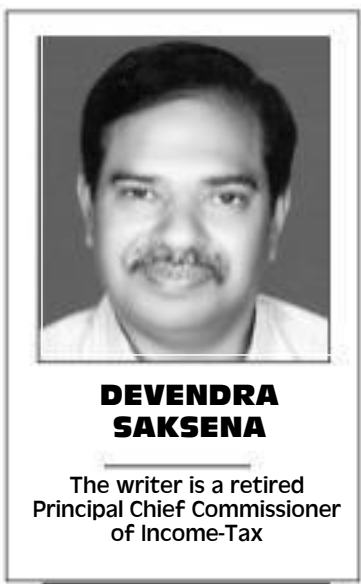
Coming to education in grades 1 to 8, the majority of children study in Government schools in villages, almost all of which are plagued by grave shortages of infrastructure. Visit any village school and you would find a crumbling building where a single teacher may be teaching two or three classes of disinterested children in a single room. Most likely the school would have no running water, electricity or toilets. It would be futile to expect better learning outcomes with such deficient human and physical infrastructure. In these circumstances, the goal of experiential learning in middle school would certainly be difficult to achieve.

The NEP has the laudable objective of providing vocational education to 50 per cent learners, with all students taking a year-long survey course on vocational skills and crafts in Grades 6-8, followed by access to vocational courses along with academic courses, in Grades 9-12, with students having the choice to 'mix and match'. However, with negligible infrastructure in terms of workplaces and teachers, the implementation of this provision would certainly take time. Certainly, the educational system is ill-prepared for the wide-ranging changes that are slated to take effect from the academic year 2022-23, more so with all schools closed and the entire Government machinery focussed on combating the Coronavirus pandemic. Establishment of the

National Assessment Centre, PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development) for evaluating all school boards is a giant step forward. Hopefully, PARAKH would end the reign of education mafias that have eroded the credibility of most State Education Boards. Bihar Board achieved widespread notoriety when photographs of parents scaling walls to "help" their wards in Board examinations were published. This notoriety was reinforced when videos of Bihar toppers fumbling to answer basic questions went viral. The once respected UP Board did not lag behind; one sixth of the examinees dropped out when the UP Government decided to go tough with the copying mafias. At the same time the full implication of the goal of the NEP to make tenth and twelfth board examinations 'easi-

er' spelt out. If the target is to award more marks to examinees then we really have had enough of it, with board toppers getting 100 per cent marks and lakhs getting more than 95 per cent marks. Awarding more marks may simply not be possible. Examinations like the JEE-Advanced

show the mirror to the stellar performance of board toppers. The number of eligible candidates after JEE-Advanced 2018 was much less than the seats available at the IITs. At the instance of Ministry of Human Resource Development, the cut-off was lowered by 10 per cent, which increased the number of eligible candidates by more than 80 per cent, even then only 33,000 odd students qualified for admission though lakhs had scored above 90 per cent in the Twelfth Board examinations. Currently, educational standards at all levels have been deliberately lowered to conceal the rot in the educational system; only 7.5 per cent of the 8 lakh students could pass the UGC-NET examination of December 2019. Hopefully, the NEP would address this malady adequately. A major shortcoming of the NEP is that it is a document prepared by academicians that does not focus adequately on how to make education useful for business, industry and society. Ideally, our educational system should turn out well quali-



DEVENDRA SAKSENA
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A MEMBER OF THE
ANN
ASIA NEWS NETWORK
ASIAN VOICES

Safety nets of power

The office of the senior presidential secretary for civil affairs has reportedly worked out a draft decree of the revised Prosecutors' Office Act and sent it to the Justice Ministry. The National Assembly passed revisions to the act in January, as well as to the Criminal Procedure Act, limiting the authority of prosecutors and expanding that of the police. The revised laws and related decrees will take effect early next month. The draft decree restricts prosecutors to cases involving public officials holding the top four ranks out of nine, if they stand accused of accepting bribes of 30 million won (\$24,960) or more, or of smuggling narcotics. Cases involving lower-ranking public officials, bribery allegations concerning less than 30 million won or the mere possession of narcotics will be investigated by the police. If a new agency is launched, possibly next month, to investigate high-ranking public officials, prosecutors will only be responsible for investigating midlevel officials in the central government ~ those holding exactly the fourth rank. If the prosecution wants to investigate socially significant cases or ones that involve harm to many people, according to the draft decree, the prosecutor general must get prior approval from the justice minister. Effectively, the minister doubles as prosecutor general. If the justice minister intervenes in investigations in this way, prosecutors will likely lose their political independence and become slaves of the powerful. If the decree takes effect as drafted and Justice Minister Choo Mi-ae can decide whether to open an investigation, it will become practically impossible to probe allegations against anyone in the ruling camp. Even without the decree, Choo has already checked the prosecutor general by exercising the right to command him ~ a right rarely used by justice ministers to avoid compromising the political neutrality of investiga-

The Korea Herald

tions. Opposition parties condemned the draft decree as a trick to block the prosecution from investigating those in power during the remainder of the current presidency.

The ruling camp has tried to lay down multiple safety nets to protect its power. The first net is the creation of an agency exclusively to investigate high-ranking officials. The head of the agency will be appointed by the president. If opposition parties can be given a limited role in recommending the head of the agency, the ruling camp will be able to block any probe that might target its allies. The second net is the justice minister's authority to reshuffle personnel within the prosecutors' office. Shortly after taking office, Choo broke up Prosecutor General Yoon Seok-youl's teams that had investigated allegations against figures close to President Moon Jae-in. The third net is the draft decree. If the justice minister had the right to call off high-profile investigations last year, the prosecution could not have delved into suspicions surrounding the family of former Justice Minister Cho Kuk. Also, prosecutors might not have started investigations into certain other politically charged cases ~ not even when the presidential office was suspected of having intervened in the Ulsan mayoral election to get Moon's friend of 30 years elected. Not even when Yoo Jae-soo, a former Busan vice mayor who is said to address Moon as "elder brother," was suspected of trying to cover up the presidential office's internal probe of a bribery case against him.

Yours, etc., Tarsem Singh,
Mahilpur, 29 July.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

Like beggars in a casino

SIR, With reference to Rup Narayan Das's attempt at a comparative study between two systems, Indian and China, born almost in similar times (*The Statesman*, 2 August), it must be said that like twins brought up in different social and economic ecosystems, the two giants were bound to take different routes in their respective roads to development.

We Indians mistakenly seek solace in gleeful ignorance that someday there will be great churning in the political and economic situation obtaining in the dragon land, when the Chinese public shall revolt and overthrow the prevailing dispensation, which we call 'oppressive' from our frame of reference. I do not see any possibility of that desirable situation happening in the next 50 years.

The reason is simple. Chinese policymakers have taken care of the basic needs of their people - food, clothing and shelter. Self-actualisation is a democratic construct, not of much importance in a common man's hierarchy of

basic needs. We, as a nation, are mentally and culturally unique. We have to muster our resources towards providing basic needs to the suffering populace, allowing democracy to strengthen its roots in an already fertile soil.

Time is running out fast. A democratic polity without ensur-

ing fulfilment of basic needs of its populace is like a beggar in a casino.

Yours, etc., Vinod Pandey,
Kolkata, 2 August.

GOVERNORS' ROLE

SIR, This refers to your editorial 'Governor's move' (29 July). Rajasthan Governor Kalraj Mishra's stipulation that he can summon the state's assembly session only if

he is given 21 days' notice by Chief minister Ashok Gehlot is blatantly aimed at helping disgruntled Congress MLAs marshal the forces required to topple the government.

Though Governors are considered President of India's nominees they do the bidding of their political masters at the Centre, obviously to return the favour of their appointments. To be fair to the BJP, when the Congress was ruling at

the Centre, Governors similarly used to do the dirty work of discomfiting state governments. It is, therefore, very clear that they will continue to play a partial role in any political crisis until these two main parties put their heads together to find a permanent solution to this constitutional malfeasance.

Yours, etc., Rupam Guha, Kolkata, 3 August.



CHEAPER COVID CARE

SIR, Are not the Prime Minister, his group of Ministers, state Chief Ministers, law-makers and politicians aware of the fact that a Covid-19 positive patient is charged exorbitantly by private hospitals in the country? Do they not know that a minimum of Rs 12-15 lakh per Covid positive patient is charged in a private hospital? Do they not know admission costs a huge amount of money? Do they not know that commencement of the treatment is subject to payment of a substantial deposit in private hospitals?

The Government of India and State governments have taken refuge under the centuries-old 'Epidemic Diseases Act 1897' since March this year. Can't we introduce a new Epidemic Diseases Act (2020) on priority to serve the interests of the people? Can't we ensure through such new legislation that private hospitals provide treatment at a 'minimum cost' (that may be fixed by the government) for Covid-positive patients? Are we dependent on the British government's approval? Around 55,000 people are infected with the coronavirus every day and the death toll is soaring. Covid-positive patients are running here and there for admission owing to non-availability of 'beds' in government hospitals. I feel that the situation permits no delay. The Government of India in consultation with state governments must take the initiative to ensure an affordable package for treatment all over the country.

The blame game and lessons from Ladakh

Manish Tewari, the Congress spokesperson, in an article titled, 'India-China in 1962 and 2020' published in *Outlook* states, “The question, therefore, is can CDS - the single point military advisor to the government, 14 Corps Commander, or for that matter even the defence and Prime Minister escape from responsibility for theatre-level incursions? The coming months will answer that question.”

Guneet Chaudhary, a Supreme Court advocate, writing on the principle of accountability in the armed forces mentions, “The principle of accountability should be followed and whoever is found responsible in the chain of command for the failure should be held accountable.”

Shiv Kunal Verma, writing for the *Sunday Guardian* concludes the maze of intelligence agencies, is a short-coming. “If they (details of intelligence agencies) were to be listed, it would make India not only sound like an extreme police state, it would seem even a mouse cannot find a mate without a file being opened on it.” He adds that this plethora of agencies, “ensures there is actually very little responsibility, and as we move up the narrow funnel to the top, it becomes even more critical for those in power to cover-up for their blunders.” He also mentions the multiple responsibility of sensitive and unmarked borders between the MoD and MHA as another cause.

Addressing the Centre for Land Warfare Studies, barely 10 days after Doklam concluded, General Bipin Rawat stated, “As far as northern adversary is concerned, the flexing of muscle has started. The salami slicing, taking over territory in a very gradual manner, testing our limits of threshold is something we have to be wary about and remain prepared for situations emerging which could gradually turn into conflict.” He also warned that Pakistan could take advantage of the situation on the Chinese frontier. “We have to be prepared in the North and the West.” Indian armed forces were aware that at some stage China would flex its muscles.

This leads to the question on assessing the truth behind Ladakh. Inputs about a Chinese build-up would have appeared from end January/early February when they commenced movement into Ladakh. It was, as in previous years, Chinese sol-



diers arriving for their annual exercises. However, this time the PLA began their exercises closer to the LAC. Indian forces, which normally carry out similar exercises as a counterweight, remained away due to Covid. Thus, there was no hinderance for the Chinese, opening doors for them to move forward to their claim lines.

The areas intruded were locations which the army or ITBP or both jointly patrol at regular intervals, but which are not occupied on a permanent basis. India deploying reserve forces in the garb of exercises, as a counter measure, blocks this opportunity for the Chinese, an action not done this year. Hence, whether Chinese intrusion was pre-planned, or whether they grabbed an opportunity, is unclear.

The fact that they came armed

for physical combat was evident in Galwan. The reality is that these hand-held weapons were not employed in the initial clash at Pangong Tso, indicating that China possessed them as part of their inventory but distributed them once they had finalised their future course of action.

From the above there are a few deductions that can be made. Inputs on Chinese build-up were available. However, it was assumed to be their annual exercise and hence not responded to. Their intrusion into unoccupied regions or patrolling points was possibly exploiting an opportunity. In either case, failure to determine Chinese intentions based on their recent actions in the South China Sea was an error. The next issue is why did concerned agencies mis-

interpret Chinese intentions? Here again there are plausible causes. Foremost was the belief that the Modi-Xi proximity would not lead to China adopting offensive actions against India. It was this assumption which led to reductions in the defence budget year after year. It also impacted judgement and interpretation of Chinese intentions at every level. Secondly, it was assumed to be an annual exercise and hence not considered a threat. Thirdly, agencies responsible for assessing intelligence and intentions lacked capable China experts, which led to them making errors.

Some lessons have emerged, which remain currently relevant. Firstly, neither neighbour can be trusted, nor would they adhere to norms, agreements or understand-

ings reached over time. Hence, a similar attempt could be made in other sectors, for which India needs to be prepared. Secondly, national leadership needs to ditch the idea that political proximity will act as a deterrent for China. The armed forces must remain equipped for a two-front conflict. Thirdly, there is a dire requirement for China experts in the multitude of intelligence agencies currently monitoring different aspects across the borders.

Fourthly, India needs to shift its intelligence and monitoring focus from Pakistan to China. Fifthly, there should never be any consideration to delay or cancel laid down exercises and deployments, for any reason. The delay this year was caused by the pandemic and the next could be heightened tensions along the LoC or increased terrorism in the valley. Seventhly, the concept of one border, one force and one commander must be adopted. There cannot be two agencies responsible for the same border.

Eighthly, allocation of funds for national security must be realistic, not based on political beliefs of proximity to belligerent neighbours. The defence budget this year was the lowest in percentage of GDP since 1962. Allocation of additional funds for making up shortfalls after a crisis emerges is a poor example of ensuring military preparedness. Ninthly, deployment of forces in sectors should be based on realistic assessment of threats. The true causes for the faux pas will be determined after resolution of the crisis, when the government appoints a committee, similar to the Kargil committee, to assess the entire episode and determine where there were shortcomings and what actions should be taken for the future. The committee should also consider recommendations made by the Kargil committee that were not implemented. Rather than throwing accusations across the entire hierarchy it would be better to wait for a detailed assessment to be completed.

The writer is a retired Major-General of the Indian Army.

Delhi must preserve ties with Dhaka

SHANTANU MUKHARJI

It's a strange coincidence that Bangladesh has been in the news in the very recent past for its perceived coolness towards India. Because such a trend surfaced in the wake of the Chinese aggression in Galwan valley on June 15, South Asia watchers felt that China was definitely attempting to drive a wedge between the two friendly countries taking away the warmth generated by Sheikh Hasina after she came to power in 2009. As she amply demonstrated in her promises and actions, Hasina accommodated all Indian interests including security concerns and always walked the extra mile to allay India's worries. On its part, however, as believed by Bangladesh watchers, India probably fell short of meeting Bangladesh's expectations specially on its legitimate demands of seeking a share of Teesta waters.

The Chinese aggression in Ladakh gave a ready opportunity to the Chinese to send overtures to Bangladesh in an apparent attempt to wean it away from India. Initially, it came in the form of economic packages and attractive offers narrowing the trade deficits and removing trade barriers, followed by the roping in of Pakistan to woo Bangladesh.

It would perhaps be naive to think that it's only the Chinese government which was taking all these measures. In fact there appears to be a strong pro-China lobby active in Bangladesh influencing public opinion to gradually abandon India and give a fresh look to Sino-Bangladesh relations. Soon after the Chinese misadventures in Ladakh, Bangladesh newspapers, in very provocative tenors, carried



columns questioning India on its 'silence' and refraining from retaliation as seen with the Balakot strikes in the wake of Pulwama terror attacks of 2019. The language used in these narratives could easily be interpreted as anti-India and pro-China. Similarly, debates were generated in popular Bangladesh TV channels with many showing a tilt towards China. Social media and cyber space were conspicuously filled with India bashing.

As these matters were unfolding, news came out that a Chinese company, Beijing Urban Construction Group (BUCC), was awarded a contract for the Osmany airport terminal renovation in Sylhet. It could be a routine contract but is being projected by many as a deliberate throw away to the Chinese. It would therefore, seem that propaganda by the Chinese lobby

within Bangladesh is at work.

In this context, those who favour strong India-Bangladesh ties suspect that a noted industrialist known for his proximity to PM Hasina and who is a key advisor, may be attempting to spoil friendly bilateral ties with New Delhi. He is said to have a soft corner for China and has been encouraging China to invest in Bangladesh. His closeness to Pakistan is also not ruled out by knowledgeable quarters.

A few days ago, a Dhaka newspaper castigated India for inordinate delays in completion of projects. The report quoted figures to say India was responsible for the inertia in completing time-bound projects. Such figures may only be of academic value but if rehearsed time and again they project India in poor light.

Amid these developments, Pak-

istan Prime Minister Imran Khan recently called up Sheikh Hasina and not only exchanged routine pleasantries as is done ordinarily but touched upon the sensitive issue of Kashmir. Imran knows fully well that all along Bangladesh has maintained the consistent stand that Kashmir is an internal matter of India. It's also possible that Imran wanted to take advantage of the deteriorating Indo-Nepal relations and fish in troubled waters. However, it shows political maturity on Hasina's part to have ignored Imran on the subject of Kashmir. Surely, Imran's phone call was at the prompting of China. Pakistani media too has been playing up the "new look" Pakistan-Bangladesh relationship.

Obviously, forces are at work to bring Pakistan and Bangladesh closer after bilateral relations soured when the Hasina-led government hanged to death war criminals close to Pakistan. In January this year, Pakistan appointed a new High Commissioner to Dhaka after a considerable lapse of time. This implies there would be more diplomatic activity and under that cover, pro-Pakistan and jihadi elements propped up by the ISI would resume their ugly plans to strengthen anti-India forces as they target India's security interests. This calls for a thorough counter-surveillance dynamic to neutralise any move detrimental to India and Bangladesh.

Meanwhile, not to cave in to adverse propaganda like India not honouring its commitments on pending projects, and to allay apprehensions and misgivings, Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has made diplomatic overtures. While acknowledging Bangladesh's economic growth

in recent years and the economic progress it has made, India gifted 10 Broad Gauge locomotives to the country. These were promised to Bangladesh on the occasion of Prime Minister Hasina's last India visit in October 2019.

These locomotives have been designed to accommodate Bangladesh's local railway requirements. BD Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen and Railway Minister Sujon were among those who witnessed the handing over of the locomotives. They expressed the hope that in future, the India-Bangladesh-China-Mynamar corridor would increase rail connectivity in the region. This gesture should silence those critics who accuse India of ignoring its promises.

Such damage control measures notwithstanding, forces opposed to the closeness between India and Bangladesh continue to try and inflict damage. Reports have trickled in that Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Riva Ganguly Das, who is under orders of transfer to New Delhi, has been waiting for the last four months to call on Prime Minister Hasina. This delay is extraordinary, given the friendly relations between the two countries. Plus, the present High Commissioner is an old Bangladesh hand, having served in Dhaka earlier and generated considerable goodwill. The delay has naturally kicked up speculation and emboldened anti-India forces.

Overall, India must make all efforts to ensure that it retains excellent relations with its staunchest ally in the neighbourhood.

The writer is a retired IPS officer and a security analyst who had served in Bangladesh and as a former National Security Advisor to the Prime Minister of Mauritius. Views expressed are personal.

100 YEARS AGO

OCCASIONAL NOTE

Today is the sixth anniversary of the date which saw the "Great Divide" between the world which is past and the world which has yet to be made. There are speeches of Lord Grey's delivered before the war which show that he at least had some vague conception of the possibilities involved in a war between England and Germany. It may be doubted, however, whether even the farthest seeing of those statesmen who took the portentous decision of August 4, 1914, had any clear notion of the horrors of the past six years or of the colossal and seemingly insoluble problems which they would leave in their train. In some respects the two countries which bore the brunt of the conflict show the smallest traces of it on their external physiognomy. The British Empire is a little larger and the German Empire, or Republic, a little smaller. The prestige of the one is infinitely greater, and that of the other as immeasurably smaller, than in 1914 but the physical conformation of the two is not greatly altered. On the other hand, the political configuration of Europe east and south of Germany and most of western Asia has changed as though a finished inlay work had dropped from its frame and each separate portion reassumed its original individuality. For the present it is possible only for mankind "faintly to trust the larger hope" and endeavour by faith and co-operation to produce a better world.

NEWS ITEMS

FALSE REPORTS

It has come to the notice of the Government that the body calling itself the Uaniyambad Muslim Society Khilafat Publicity Board has been disseminating a false report about the actions of the British and the Turkish Governments. Conspicuous instances are reported in some detail of the alleged raid by Enver Pasha on Constantinople, and the revival of, and repeatedly discredited, alleged attacks by the Allied troops on Mecca and Medina and the burning of the Kaaba. These stories are palpably untrue, and the Government feel confident that they cannot obtain currency among well-informed Muslims. The Government notice that certain vernacular papers have not hesitated to publish false information supplied to them through this society, Government think to warn the public against accepting as true any report alleged to emanate from the Uaniyambad Society.

FLOODS AND DISTRESS

With a view to ascertaining the real situation caused by the flood in the Tamuk sub-division the Hon. Dr. Suhrwardy, Chairman of the District Board, went down to Tamuk and accompanied by the Rev. M.K. Chakravarty, Vice-Chairman of the Tamuk Local Board, who has been devoting his services to the relief and rescue of the people since the beginning of the flood, visited the affected areas recently. Dr. Suhrwardy sent from Tamuk the following telegram to His Excellency the Governor of Bengal: Distress acute in Tamuk owing to flood. Epidemics apprehended. Local opinion suggests openings by public works of Pyratongi khal to the river Rupnarayan for speedy discharge of flood water. Prompt action by Public Works solicited to stop the breach.

SOLDIERS' AFFRAY

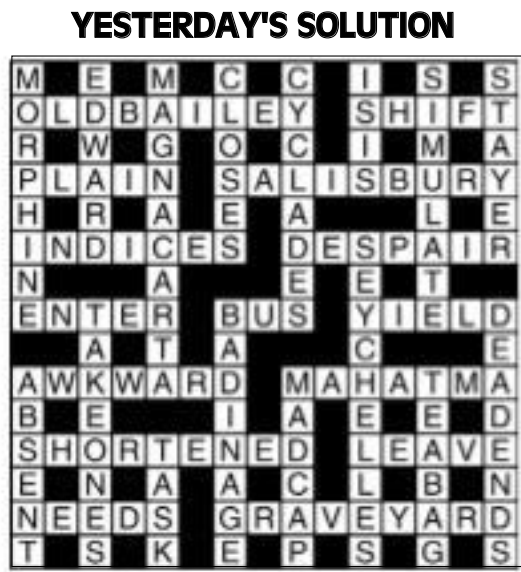
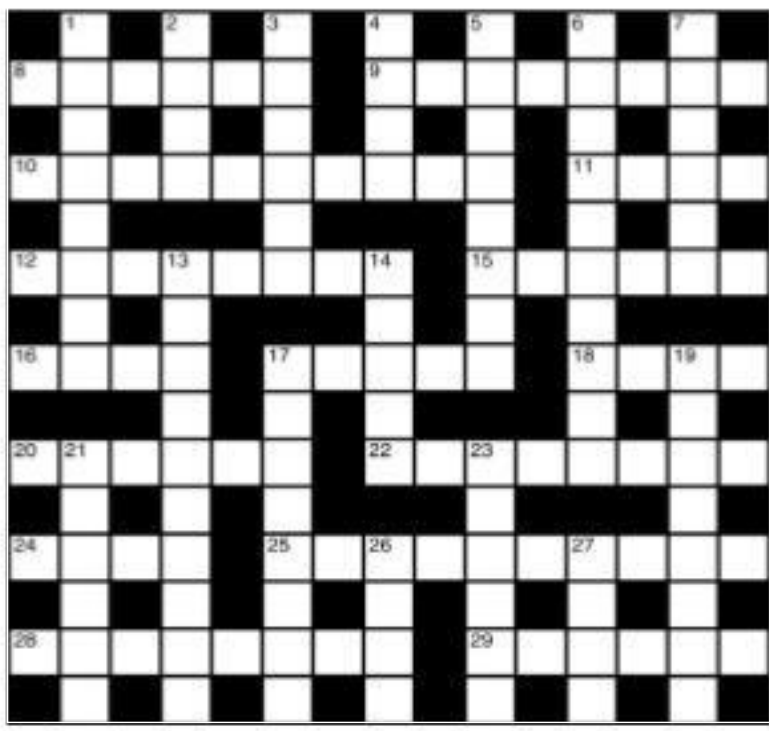
Darjeeling, Aug 3
Mr. Goode, Deputy Commissioner passed orders in the case of three soldiers on leave, Forrester, Montgomery, and Hull, who stood charged with trespassing into the Himalayan Restaurant on the 16th July at midnight. Forrester was further charged with breaking the doors, damaging articles, and assaulting the beat constable. Accused were arrested at the Soldiers' Club, and challenged. The court found Forrester guilty of house-breaking, mischief, and obstruction to the constable on duty, and he was sentenced to three months' imprisonment. Montgomery was convicted of trespass was fined Rs 25. Hull was convicted of trespass and fined Rs 50. The court observed that it was not an ordinary street affray, whereto soldiers might be led under the influence of liquor, and he characterised Forrester's offence as serious.

CHARGE OF CRIMINAL BREACH OF TRUST

Allahabad, Aug 3
At the Allahabad High Court Sir P.C. Banerji has admitted for hearing an appeal by Kanhaiya, who was convicted at Mirzapur for criminal breach of trust in respect of nearly ninety thousand rupees in his capacity as the paid agent of the Rokpur Ghat Company, and sentenced to seven years' rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs 20,000. The accused was the agent in the Central Provinces of Messrs. Kilburn and Co., Managing Agents of the company, to obtain crude shellac for manufacture, and the charge is in respect of monies advanced to him. The accused says he did not embezzle the money, but spent it in making forward contracts, and advances in the company's interests.

CROSSWORD

NO 28033



ACROSS

- 8 Cross punched into a heel designed to let air out (6)
9 Love splitting tree with axes in fury (8)
10 Living together in company with sixteen? Extraordinarily tense (10)
11 Whiskey chaser and a penetrating look (1-3)
12 Ex-monk moved to take in us long-haired creatures (4,4)
15 "During sex ..." an adult person from Porlock interrupted its description (6)
16 One who's paid in military emergency requiring cool heads (4)
17 State vote held in Assam and Darjeeling? (5)
20 Book that's brutal, no less (4)
20 For example British beef is a

- 22 source of protein (3,3)
Using hands, man goes for it to show how babies are made (8)
24 Line of little dots on the radio (4)
25 Agree to accept 'Leave' with difficulty (10)
28 Passed by holidaymaker's island going into East Germany (8)
29 Reserve short test to go over mountaineering equipment (3,3)

DOWN

- 1 Lack of shelter as river pours turbulently inside (8)
Unknown player first produced by Ramsey? (4)
3 Region of Welsh county (6)
4 Title and last word back to front (4)
5 Learn scripts in appropriate surroundings (8)

- 6 Robotic voice describing new nadir for African city (10)
7 Play regularly after times in goal increase (6)
13 They fight footballers around penalty area (4,6)
14 Crossed lines in nearly new American network (5)
17 An amount of poison going towards team, Guardiola's team (8)
19 Allow former partner to engage in offensive old way of spreading news (8)
21 Large plane happy to circle Californian airport (6)
23 Woody's laughing face accepting oily mixture (6)
26 Fashion these domed shelters upside down (4)
27 Film series in ten pieces (1-3)

NOTE: Figures in parentheses denote the number of letters in the words required. (By arrangement with The Independent, London)





Although momentum has slowed down,
stock specific action is still happening

VINOD NAIR
HEAD OF RESEARCH AT GEOJIT FINANCIAL SERVICES

THUMBNAILS

BHEL crisis: State-run engineering major BHEL on Monday said it is still grappling with uncertainties with regard to resumption of normal business operations as rising coronavirus infection cases have led to labour shortage and supply chain disruptions. The country went into a complete lockdown in March-end to check the spread of coronavirus and the government started giving relaxations in lockdown guidelines towards the April-end by gradually opening up economic activities.

PTI

'Jewellery & Gem Virtual Exhibition': Informa Markets in India (formerly UBM India), India's leading B2B exhibition organiser in association with Jewellery NET announced the debut of 'Jewellery & Gem Virtual Exhibition' on 19-20 August. The virtual show will also witness participation from states such as Maharashtra, Delhi, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka and West Bengal, says a Press release.

SNS

Manufacturing activity contracts for 4th month

The survey results showed a re-acceleration of declines in the key indices

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 3 AUGUST

India's manufacturing sector activity contracted at a slightly faster pace in July as demand conditions remained subdued amid prolonged closures, following which firms reduced both staff numbers as well as purchasing activity, a monthly survey said today.

The headline seasonally adjusted IHS Markit India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) stood at 46 in July, down from 47.2 in June.

This is the fourth straight month of contraction for the Indian manufacturing sector.

In April, the index had slipped into contraction mode, after remaining in the growth territory for 32 consecutive months. In PMI parlance, a print above 50 means expansion, while a score below that denotes contraction.

"Latest PMI data from Indian manufacturers shed more light on the state of economic conditions in one of the

SUBDUED DEMAND

» Demand conditions in July remained subdued amid prolonged closures, following which firms reduced both staff numbers as well as purchasing activity

» The headline seasonally adjusted IHS Markit India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) stood at 46 in July, down from 47.2 in June

» Latest PMI data from Indian manufacturers shed more light on the state of economic conditions in one of the countries worst affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, said Eliot Kerr, Economist at IHS Markit.

The survey results showed a re-acceleration of declines in the key indices of output and new orders, undermining the trend towards stabilisation seen over the past two months,



» Export orders also witnessed a decline. Survey participants commented that international clients were hesitant to place orders while the duration of the pandemic remained uncertain

Kerr said.

He further noted that "anecdotal evidence indicated that firms were struggling to obtain work, with some of their clients remaining in lockdown, suggesting that we won't see a pick-up in activity until infection rates are quelled and restrictions can be further removed".

countries worst affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, said Eliot Kerr, Economist at IHS Markit.

The survey results showed a re-acceleration of declines in the key indices of output and new orders, undermining the trend towards stabilisation seen over the past two months,

Rising real lending rate roils RBI rate cuts: BofA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 3 AUGUST

Even after the Reserve Bank has slashed the key interest rates by 135 basis points (bps) since February this year, the real lending rates have only gone up by 44 bps in spite of nominal lending rates falling by 105 bps during the same period, says a report.

According to the house economists at BofA Securities India, this high lending rate is the main reason for the steeply falling credit flows, which conversely also point to a deeper GDP contraction, accentuated by the pandemic.

The brokerage had last month pencilled in 5 to 7.5 per cent contraction in GDP this fiscal, saying each month of lockdown has shaved off 100 bps of the economy.

According to them, "loan flow is a whopping 106 per cent lower than last year, since the first lockdown was lifted in Mid-May" and both low credit demand and high real lending rates are constraining the recovery.

A saving grace is that rising M3 (money supply) growth creates room for lending rate cuts

to the tune of 100 bps more before March, they say.

"High real lending rates, adjusted for core WPI as a proxy for pricing power, still constrains recovery beyond the pandemic shock. While nominal MCLR has come off by 105 bps since March 2019 on RBI easing, the real MCLR has jumped by 44 bps, with core WPI inflation dropping to 0.8 per cent in June from 2.3 per cent in March 2019. "Similarly, since March 2019, the weighted average lending rate (WALR) has eased 37 bps in nominal terms in May, the real WALR has shot up 147 bps," they say and point out that this is one of the reasons for the steep fall in credit offtake.

On the deep growth contraction due to the pandemic, they note that credit flows between July and mid-March is 36 per cent lower than last year, and between end-March to YTD the contraction is 52.2 per cent from 2019. From end-April, credit contracted by Rs 50,800 crore in contrast to the offtake of Rs 44,600 crore last year; and from end-May it contracted by Rs 2,500 crore in contrast to an offtake of Rs 42,300 crore last year.

Apart from rate cuts, the

RBI could announce a \$105 billion OMO (open market operation) calendar on one hand to help banks lower their lending rates and the finance ministry on the other hand could announce recapitalisation of state-run banks either through recap bonds or through doing a revaluation of the RBI reserves.

"The latest RBI data shows bank loan growth has slowed to 5.9 per cent on 17 July from 7 per cent in February and 12.2 per cent last year. The numbers are starkly looked at credit flows between mid-July and mid-March (covering the lockdown), end-March, end-April (post-lockdown 1.0) and end-May (post-unlock 1.0). In each case, credit flow contraction is higher than 2019. Besides, the pandemic shocker, high real lending rates continue to remain a major worry.

"The only good news is that rising money supply or M3 growth which rose to 12.4 per cent as against our 9.1 per cent estimate, creating the space for higher credit offtake. On balance, we cut FY21 loan growth to 8.5 per cent from 10.8 per cent earlier, assuming 6 per cent GDP contraction," says the report.

40 crore bank accounts opened under PMJDY

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 3 AUGUST

Around 40 crore bank accounts have been opened under Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), launched about six years ago by the Modi government. As per the latest figures shared by Department of Financial Service, there are 40.05 crore beneficiaries of this scheme and deposits in Jan Dhan bank accounts are in excess of Rs 1.30 lakh crore.

"Another milestone achieved under world's largest financial inclusion initiative, PMJDY: Total accounts opened under the scheme crosses 40 crore mark. Committed to take financial inclusion to the last mile!" Department of Financial Services said in a tweet.

The scheme was launched by government on 28 August 2014 to provide universal access to banking facilities to everyone in the country. This year it is the sixth anniversary of PMJDY launch. The accounts opened under this scheme are called Basic Savings Bank Deposit (BSBD) accounts with additional features of RuPay debit card and over-

draft. Also, one doesn't have to maintain a minimum balance. In view of the runaway success of the scheme, the government in 2018 enhanced the accident insurance cover to Rs 2 lakh, from Rs 1 lakh for new accounts opened after 28 August 2018. Besides, the overdraft limit facility was also doubled to Rs 10,000. Later, government also shifted the focus on accounts from "every household" to "every unbanked adult".

Over 50 per cent of the Jan Dhan account holders are women and the government as part of Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana remitted Rs 1,500 per account in three equal monthly installments to support the poor during the Covid-19 crisis. The government on 26 March 2020 announced an ex-gratia payment of Rs 500 to be credited to women Jan Dhan account holders for three months starting from April.

The objective of PMJDY is to ensure access to various financial services like availability of basic savings bank account, access to need based credit, remittance facility, insurance and pension to weaker sections and low income groups.

Market crashes 667 points; RIL, bank stocks bleed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 3 AUGUST

The Sensex crashed 667 points while the Nifty closed below the 10,900-mark today as investors remained in selling mode for the fourth straight session amid frothy valuations and mounting Covid-19 cases.

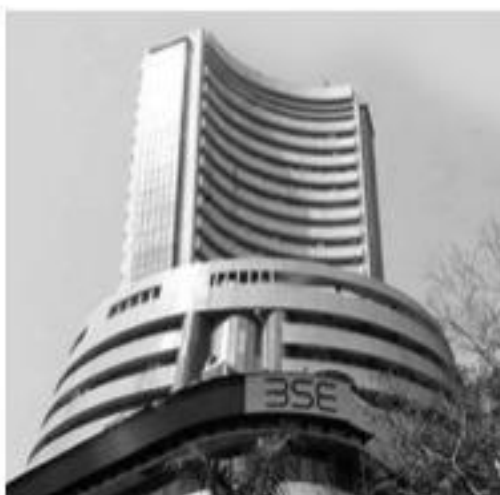
A depreciating rupee and grim macroeconomic data further sapped risk appetite, traders said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex, which opened in the red, stayed in the negative zone throughout the session to close at 36,939.60, down 667.29 points or 1.77 per cent.

Similarly, the NSE Nifty tumbled 181.85 points or 1.64 per cent to end at 10,891.60.

The Sensex has now lost 1,553.35 points in four days, while the Nifty has shed 408.95 points.

Kotak Bank was the top loser in the Sensex pack in today's session, slumping 4.41 per cent, followed by IndusInd Bank, Axis Bank, ONGC, HDFC Bank, Bajaj



Auto and Reliance Industries (RIL).

Only six index constituents closed with gains - Titan, Tata Steel, SBI, L&T, HCL Tech and PowerGrid, spurring up to 3.15 per cent.

According to traders, massive selling in index majors RIL and HDFC duo dragged the key indices lower.

Further, foreign fund outflows and concerns over the unabated rise in Covid-19 cases across the world kept investors on edge, they added.

On the macro front, India's manufacturing sector activity contracted at a slightly faster pace in July as demand

conditions remained subdued, PMI data showed.

The headline seasonally adjusted IHS Markit India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) stood at 46 in July, down from 47.2 in June. This is the fourth straight month of contraction for the Indian manufacturing sector.

"As virus cases continued to rise and with the uncertainty regarding rate actions by the RBI, markets succumbed to the momentum slowdown visible in the last couple of trading sessions. Losses were led by financials. Although momentum has slowed down, stock specific action is still happening, dependent mainly on the earnings results and commentary. As long as the markets hold the current range, these downturns could be short-lived and should be utilised to accumulate quality stocks," said Vinod Nair, head of research at Geojit Financial Services.

BSE bankex, finance, energy, oil and gas, realty, utilities and telecom indices fell up to 2.73 per cent, while, consumer durables, healthcare, metal and industrials ended in the green.

Broader BSE mid-cap index slipped 0.31 per cent, while the small-cap gauge rose 1.02 per cent. Global markets were mostly higher following upbeat PMI data from China and the Eurozone, though the rising coronavirus case load capped the gains.

Bourses in Shanghai, Tokyo, Seoul settled on a positive note, while Hong Kong ended in the red. Stock exchanges in Europe were also trading on a positive note in early deals.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude was trading 0.69 per cent lower at \$43.22 per barrel.

India's Covid-19 tally crossed the 18-lakh mark today, just a day after it went past 17 lakh, with 52,972 cases reported in a day, according to the Union health ministry data. The number of recoveries surged to over 11.86 lakh, while the death toll climbed to 38,135.

PUBLIC SECTOR ROUNDUP

HUDCO SIGNS MoU WITH YEIDA



M Nagaraj, CMD Housing & Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO) and Arunvir Singh, CEO, Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA) signed an MoU for providing financial assistance to the tune of over Rs 4000 crore for various projects adjoining the up-coming International Airport at Jewar, Uttar Pradesh. These would include land acquisition, development of industrial estates, electronic city, housing projects and associated infrastructure development on both sides of Yamuna expressway over the next 3 years.

10 NEW SBI BRANCHES INAUGURATED



State Bank of India (SBI) inaugurated its ten new Branches at East Kidwai Nagar, Nirman Vihar, Dilshad Colony, Model Town, S.N. Marg, New Delhi, Taj Nagri, Agra, Kalindi Vihar, Agra, Gandhi Nagar, Agra, Naurangabad, Aligarh, Delta-II, Greater Noida. These Branches were e-inaugurated by Challa Sreenivasulu Setty, Managing Director (Retail & Digital Banking) State Bank of India in the presence of Vijay Ronjan, Chief General Manager, New Delhi Circle.

Odisha CM inaugurates Plasma Bank

A Plasma Bank was inaugurated through online by Chief Minister of Odisha Naveen Patnaik at Ispat General Hospital of SAIL, Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) on 31 July. The Plasma Bank, set up in association with Government of Odisha for the treatment of the critically ill COVID-19 patients. Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas and Steel Dhamendra Pradhan has been stressing on strengthening infrastructure and expanding

services in SAIL's hospitals. Since the outbreak of the pandemic, he had instructed to create facilities for COVID-19 testing and treatment at Ispat General Hospital for the people of the region. Earlier in the month of April, a COVID Sample Testing Lab was established in IGH which has proved to be immensely beneficial in containing the spread of the disease.

The Plasma Bank which is

first in this region is equipped with Aphesis machine for plasma collection, sealer, crash cart, oxygen line and a Plasma cabinet for storage of 350-500 units of plasma. A number of stringent tests will be carried out in the Plasma Bank to check the quality of the plasma before providing the same for treatment of COVID-19 patients.



Chandan Kr Mondol takes charge as director (commercial), NTPC

Chandan Kumar Mondol assumes his new role as director (commercial) at NTPC Ltd from 1 August.

Mondol has been with NTPC for over 35 years and has held several key leadership positions across multiple business units.

Mondol joined NTPC as 9th Batch Executive Trainee

(ET) in 1984. He has vast experience and comprehensive knowledge of the power sector and has worked in both power plant and corporate functions. He started off his journey with the project execution and commissioning of 3X500 MW units at Ramagundam and 4X210 MW units at Kahalgao.



National Book Trust celebrates 64th foundation day

The National Book Trust, India celebrated its 64th foundation day on 1 August. The Annual Foundation Day lecture was held online E-attended by all NBT officials.

Professor Govind Prasad Sharma, chairman NBT, wished all the officials on the joyous occasion, and said, "The National Book Trust, India was established in the year 1957 with the objective to produce

and encourage the production of good literature in Indian languages and to make such literature available at affordable prices. Today, we are not just publishing books in all major Indian languages but also in various dialects and tribal languages, as well as in Braille. Our recent projects in the state of Jharkhand and Mizoram are a few praiseworthy examples".

SBI donates dresses to 1,000 Covid-19 patients



State Bank of India, New Delhi Circle donated dresses to 1000 patients, under CSR Initiative, to Sardar Patel Covid Care Centre, RSSB, Bhati, New Delhi under the aegis of CSR activities of SBI Foundation. Pranay Ranjan Dwivedi, DGM on behalf of Vijay Ronjan, CGM, New Delhi Circle handed over the dresses to Dr BM Mishra, district magistrate, South Delhi District, which will be used by covid patients. State Bank of India, the largest Bank of the nation, has been proactive in the fight against COVID-19 pandemic.

The amount spent on its expenditure was provided under initiative called 'Sreedhan', wherein the contributions were made by spouses of SBI staff/ladies

of SBI family to SBI Foundation. Ronjan informed that during the pandemic, State Bank of India, New Delhi Circle has collaborated with other essential service providers in their fight against COVID-19.

SBI donates 5 ventilators to G B Pant Hospital

State Bank of India, New Delhi Circle donated five ventilators, under CSR Initiative, to G B Pant Hospital, New Delhi under the aegis of CSR activities of SBI Foundation. Pranay Ranjan Dwivedi, DGM and Jitendra Kumar Sharma, RM on behalf of Vijay Ronjan, CGM, New Delhi Circle handed over the Ventilators to Dr Anil Agarwal, Director G B Pant Hospital.

PFC signs agreement with IIT-K

Government-owned Power Finance Corporation (PFC), India's leading NBFC, signed a MoA with Indian Institute of Technology - Kanpur (IIT-K) for training, research, and entrepreneurship development in smart grid technology.

Under the MoA, PFC will pro-

vide financial assistance of Rs 2,38,97,000 to IIT-K under its CSR initiative. R Murahari, executive director (CSR&SD), PFC informed that the objective of the pact is to provide support to IIT-K in developing infrastructure for research and development on smart grid technology.

LIC of India announces financial results 2019-20

Life Insurance Corporation of India, India's largest life insurer, has announced its audited figures for the year ended March 2020.

New business performance by the corporation for the year ending March 2020 has shown

a growth of 25.17 per cent in its first year premium by posting a highest ever figure of Rs 1,77,977.07 cr. Pension & Group Superannuation Business crossed one lac crore and collected Rs 1,26,696.21 cr as New Business Premium Income

as against Rs 90848.86 cr in the previous year corresponding period showing a growth of 39.46 per cent.

The Corporation as at March end 2020 collected Rs 3,79,062.56 cr of Total Premium Income as compared to Rs

3,37,185.40 cr collected during the corresponding period last year showing a very robust growth of 12.42 per cent. Total policy payouts amounted to Rs 2,54,222.27 cr for the period ending 31.3.2020 as compared to Rs 2,50,936.23 cr for the cor-

responding period last year, showing an increase of 1.31 per cent. The Corporations Gross Total Income grew to Rs 6,15,882.94 cr for the period ending 31 March from Rs 5,60,784.39 cr as at the last corresponding period, showing a

handsome growth of over 9.83 per cent. Total Assets of the Corporation stood at Rs 31,96,214.81 cr as compared to Rs 31,11,847.28 cr for the corresponding period last year thus posting a growth of over 2.71 per cent.



The U.S. keeps monitoring, harassing and willfully detaining Chinese students & researchers

CHINA FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESPERSON WANG WENBIN
ACCUSING THE US OF HARASSING CHINESE STUDENTS AND RESEARCHERS

IS attack on Afghan prison kills 21

Another 43 people have been wounded in the assault that began late Sunday

ASSOCIATED PRESS
JALALABAD (AFGHANISTAN),
3 AUGUST

An Islamic State group attack on a prison in eastern Afghanistan holding hundreds of its members raged on Monday after killing at least 21 people in fighting overnight, a local official said.

Another 43 people have been wounded in the assault that began late Sunday when an Islamic State suicide bomber slammed his explosive-laden vehicle into the Jalalabad prison's entrance.

Militants then opened fire on security forces at the prison in the capital of Nangarhar province, some 115 kilometers east of Kabul.

Three attackers have been killed so far but the battle continued on Monday with sporadic gunfire still coming from the prison grounds and



Afghan soldiers patrol outside a prison during an ongoing raid in Jalalabad on Monday.

nearby residential compound, said Attaullah Khogyani, a spokesman for the governor of Nangarhar province.

The dead included civilians, prisoners, guards and Afghan security forces, Khogyani said.

Police believe several militants slipped away into a nearby residential complex, making it more difficult to flush them out, authorities said.

Khogyani said security personnel were moving cau-

tiously to avoid civilian casualties. Afghan Security and Defense Force personnel in armoured vehicles surrounded the prison in the middle of Jalalabad, just 700 meters from the governor's office.

Soldiers were still evacuating residents from the area on Monday as sporadic gunshots rang out. The Islamic State group's affiliate in Afghanistan, known as IS in Khorasan province, has

claimed responsibility for the attack. The affiliate is headquartered in Nangarhar province.

The motive of the attack wasn't immediately clear. However, some prisoners have escaped during the fighting, said another provincial official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to journalists.

The prison houses about 1,500 inmates, of which several hundred are believed to be Islamic State members. Khogyani said about 1,000 prisoners who earlier escaped had been found by security forces across the city. It wasn't immediately clear if any prisoners were still at large.

The attack comes a day after authorities said Afghan special forces killed a senior Islamic State commander near Jalalabad.

While the Islamic State

group has seen its so-called caliphate stretching across Iraq and Syria eliminated after a yearslong campaign, the group has continued fighting in Afghanistan. The extremists also have battled the Taliban in the country, whom the US overthrew following the 2001 American-led invasion after the Sept. 11 attacks.

The Taliban's political spokesman, Suhail Shaheen, told The Associated Press that his group was not involved in the Jalalabad attack.

The US struck a peace deal with the Taliban in February. A second, crucial round of negotiations between the Taliban and the political leadership in Kabul has yet to start. Still, Washington and NATO already have begun withdrawing troops in line with the deal. We have a cease-fire and are not involved in any of these attacks anywhere in the country, he said.

Philippine capital returning to lockdown as virus surges

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MANILA, 3 AUGUST

The Philippine president has agreed to place the capital and outlying provinces back under a lockdown after medical groups warned that the country was waging a losing battle against the coronavirus amid an alarming surge in infections.

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque said Monday that metropolitan Manila, the capital region of more than 12 million people, and five densely populated provinces will revert to stricter quarantine restrictions for two weeks starting Tuesday. The move, which finance and economic officials oppose, will again prohibit non-essential travel out of homes. President Rodrigo Duterte relaxed the country's lockdown on June 1 in a bid to restart the stagnant economy. Under the new

restrictions, police checkpoints will return to ensure only authorized people, including medical personnel and workers in vital companies, venture out of their homes. Interior Secretary Eduardo Ano said.

Other businesses previously allowed to partly reopen, including barbershops, internet cafes, gyms, dine-in restaurants, massage and tattoo shops, drive-in cinemas and tourist destinations, will again be closed. Authorised companies, including banks, health and food processing firms, can operate partly but need to shuttle their employees from home and work. Workers can travel by bike, motorcycles and private cars, but mass transit will be closed. Businesses in the capital and outlying regions comprise about 67 per cent of the national economy and the Duterte administration has walked a tightrope between public health and

economic revival. The economy contracted slightly in the first quarter but is likely facing a deep recession from the massive business closures that started when Duterte declared a strict lockdown in mid-March. Leaders of nearly 100 medical organizations held a rare online news conference Saturday and warned that the health system has been overwhelmed by infection spikes and may collapse as health workers fall ill or resign from exhaustion and fear.

They asked Duterte to reimpose a tight lockdown in the capital to allow the government to give health workers a time out and allow the government to recalibrate its response to the pandemic. We are waging a losing battle against Covid-19 and we need to draw up a consolidated, definitive plan of action, the groups said in a letter to Duterte that they read publicly.

Yemen Houthi rebels claim fighters shot down US-made drone

CAIRO, 3 AUGUST

Yemen's Houthi rebels claim they shot down a US-made drone over the country's northern border with Saudi Arabia. The kingdom and the US military on Monday did not immediately acknowledge losing a drone.

Brig. Gen. Yehia Sarie, a Houthi military spokesman, said in a statement their air defenses downed an AeroVironment RQ-20 Puma drone Sunday over the district of Harad in Yemen's northern Hajjah province.

Footage later aired by the Houthi's Al-Masirah satellite channel showed fighters gathered around the hand-launched drone, which appeared to have bullet holes. The battery-powered drone had a camera, also apparently struck by a bullet. Masking tape on its tail bore what appeared to be the palm-tree and crossed-swords logo of Saudi Arabia, Arabic written on the side read God Bless You, an inscription common on Saudi aircraft. The Saudi military, which has been fighting the Houthis since 2015, is not known to operate this drone. A Saudi military spokesman did not respond to a request for comment. First used by US special forces, other arms of the American military now use the drone for surveillance work. The U.S. military's Central Command and Air Force Central Command did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Singapore reports 226 new Covid-19 cases, total count crosses 53000

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
SINGAPORE, 3 AUGUST

Singapore's Covid-19 cases crossed 53,000 on Monday after 226 fresh infections, mostly migrant workers living in dormitories, were detected across the country, according to the health ministry.

The Ministry of Health (MOH) said there was only one community case, a prison inmate on a short-term visit pass, who had arrived in Singapore before the implementation of border measures. He was segregated from the general inmate population after his admission to Changi Prison Complex on July 30, and was tested as part of the Singapore Prison Service's proactive screening of newly admitted inmates, it said. Singapore reported 226 new Covid-19 cases on Monday, taking the country's tally to 53,051, the ministry said.

There were also nine imported cases who had been placed on stay-home notice upon arrival in Singapore. Currently, 109 confirmed cases were still in hospital as of Sunday, while 5,763 are isolated and cared for at community facilities for mild symptoms, or are clinically well but still test positive for Covid-19, it said.

In all, 46,926 have fully recovered from the infection and have been discharged from hospitals or community care facilities. These included 186 discharged on Sunday.

Meanwhile, a 33-year-old female permanent resident with links to a previous imported case that had travelled to

India tested Covid-19 positive on Sunday. The previous case was a 13-year-old boy who was also a permanent resident here. He had been asymptomatic but tested positive on July 30. There were also five imported cases who were placed on stay-home notice upon arrival in Singapore, the ministry said on Sunday.

Two were work pass holders employed here and had arrived from India on July 19 and 21. Another two were dependant's pass holders who had arrived from Japan and India on July 21. The remaining case was a student's pass holder who had come from Indonesia on July 19. All of them were placed on a 14-day stay-home notice upon arrival in Singapore and were tested at their facilities.

FERVENT PRAYER



A Buddhist monk prays outside the closed Shwedagon pagoda, amid restrictions to reduce the spread of the coronavirus, during celebrations of the full moon day of Warso in Yangon on Monday.

China accuses US of harassing Chinese students, researchers

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BEIJING, 3 AUGUST

China on Monday accused the United States of monitoring, harassing and willfully detaining Chinese students and researchers in the U.S. Foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin's comments follow the denial of a bail request in California for a university researcher accused of lying about her ties to China's military and Communist Party to gain access to the United States.

Wang said China had no intention of helping Juan Tang escape the country, but did not otherwise comment

directly on the accusations against her.

However, he said China urges the U.S. to handle the case fairly in accordance with the law and ensure the safety and legitimate rights and interests due to Tang.

"For some time, the U.S., with ideological prejudice, keeps monitoring, harassing and willfully detaining Chinese students and researchers, and making presumptions of guilt against Chinese researchers," Wang said.

The U.S. actions have seriously violated the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese citizens and severely disrupted the normal cultural and

personnel exchanges between China and the U.S., which amounts to outright political persecution," he said.

In denying bail, U.S. Magistrate Judge Deborah Barnes said Tang, 37, would have reason to leave the country if released. Tang has been held without bail since July 23 when she was arrested after she left the Chinese Consulate in San Francisco to seek medical care for her asthma.

Tang, who has a doctorate in cellular biology, entered the United States on Dec. 27, 2019, to work at the University of California, Davis, as a visiting researcher in the

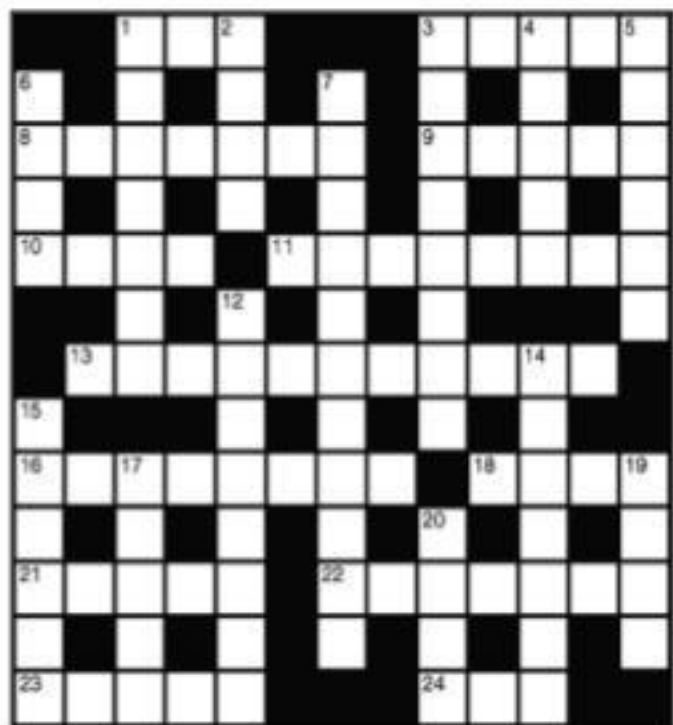
Department of Radiation Oncology, Alexandra Negin, an assistant federal public defender, said in her filing asking the court for her release on bail. The lab closed because of the coronavirus pandemic and Tang had been preparing to return to China, Negin said. Tang and three other scientists living in the U.S. face charges of lying about their status as members of China's People's Liberation Army, or PLA. All were charged with visa fraud, the Justice Department said. Tang was the last of the four to be arrested after the Justice Department accused the Chinese Consulate in San Francisco of

harboring a known fugitive.

Negin said Tang went to the consulate to seek help and remained there after FBI agents questioned her at her Davis apartment on June 20 and executed a search warrant, seizing her passport and visa. Agents found photographs of Tang in a uniform of the civilian cadre of the PLA and also reviewed articles from China that identified her military affiliation. Negin argued that the evidence against Tang is based on old photographs from when she was a student at a medical school run by the military and documents that were translated on apps.

LEISURE

10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



ACROSS
1 Say further (3)
3 Peak on a cap (5)
8 Watch (7)
9 Slightest (5)
10 Look for (4)
11 Lover of beauty (8)
13 Keep apart from others (4-7)
16 Coal mine (8)
18 Partiality (4)
21 Jewish leader (5)
22 Principal (7)
23 Intoxicating (5)
24 Unit of weight (3)

DOWN
1 Spartan (7)
2 Venture (4)
3 Changeable (8)
4 Hue (5)
5 Cad (6)
6 Canine animals (4)
7 As an inevitable consequence (11)
12 Natural liking (8)
14 Instruction (7)
15 Char (6)
17 Zodiac sign (5)
19 Culinary herb (4)
20 Swift (4)

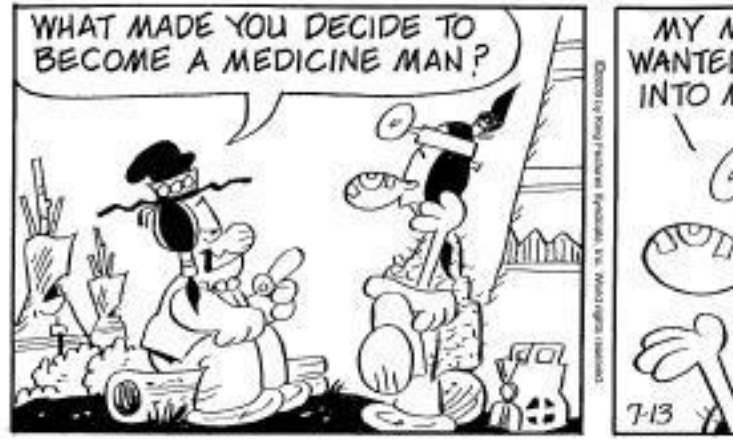
SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD
ACROSS
1 Height,
4 (High table),
7 Join,
8 Nebulous,
10 Brandy-
snap,
14 Tassel,
16 Plastic bag,
20 Basement,
21 Emir,
22 Kiss,
23 Mistle.
DOWN
1 Hoof,
2 Ignoble,
3 Henna,
5 Bulls,
6 Educated,
9 Bidet,
11 Tailback,
15 Suggest,
17 Steps,
18 Bathe,
19 Fire.

By arrangement with The Independent
Figures in parentheses denote the number of letters in the words required

BEEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker



RED EYE/Bill Yates & Mel Casson



DADDY DAZE/John Kovalski



NEED TO KNOW

HOSPITALS

• AIIMS 26588500, 26588900
• Moolchand Medcity (formerly Hospital) 42000000 & 24-hour Chemist Shop 42000447
• VidyaSagar Institute for Mental Health and Neuro-Sciences 26924300, 26924304
• Batra Hospital & Medical Research Centre 29051280, 29958747
• Deen Dayal Upadhyay 25496320, 25494403
• Guru Tegh Bahadur

22586262, 22585007

RAILWAY INQUIRY

General Inquiry 139
• Toll Free Nos. 1800112511
• SMS Inquiry Nos. 57886, 54959, 567647

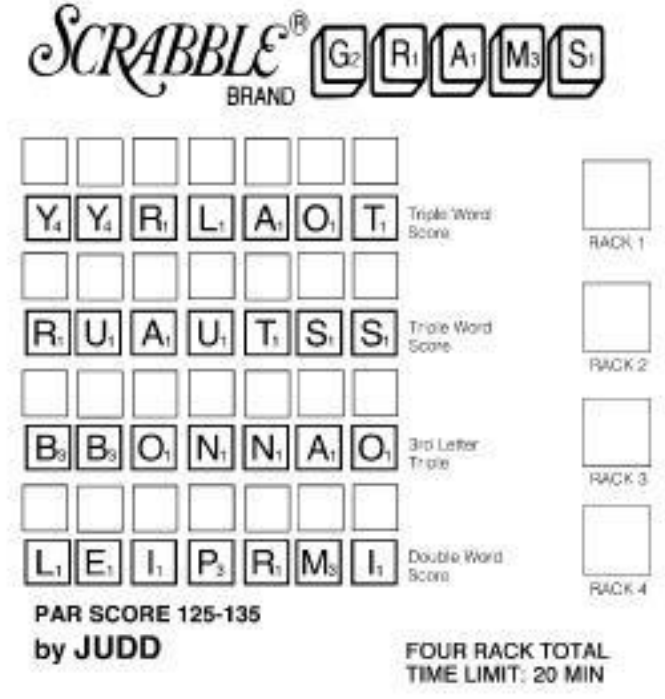
ROADWAYS INQUIRY

• ISBT (General Inquiry): 23868836, 23865181
• SMS Inquiry Nos. 23861262
• Himachal Roadways 23717473, 23325320

• Punjab Roadways 23867842, 23860626
• Rajasthan Roadways 23864470
• U.P. Roadways 23868709

FLIGHT INQUIRY

• AIR INDIA Flight Inquiry and Reservation 18001801407
• INDIGO AIRLINES New Delhi City Office 43513185, Call Centre 09910383838, 18001803838, Airlines 43513186; Indigo Reservations Air-
port 011-25671580; Terminal I-B 25671576, Palam Road 25671579, 18001803838
• JET AIRWAYS Flight Inquiry and Reservation 39841111
• EMIRATES Flight Inquiry and Reservation 33773377
• Air Canada Flight Inquiry 25656421/25656431 Reservation 41528181
• Air France Flight Inquiry and Reservation 23466262 (City) 25652294 (Airport)
• Kuwait Airways Flight Inquiry and Reservation 23354373



STRUCTIONS Make a 2 to 7 letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word, using scoring directions at right. 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. "Blanks" used as any letter have no point value. All judges' words are in the Official Scrabble Players Dictionary (Merriam-Webster) and CSW Official Scrabble Words (Chambers). Judge's solution tomorrow. 10-25-12



SUDOKU
Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green
Difficulty Level ★★★★★
Answer to previous puzzle
Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that no row, no column and no 3x3 box contains the same number. The difficulty level increases through the week.



Need for knowledge revolution

For a comprehensive educational uprising, it is necessary to understand child psychology and incorporate robust indigenous curriculums



KADAMBARI RANA

An educator can offer to a child only what they are. If the mind and heart of the teacher or the parent constitutes of conceptual confusion, narrow thoughts and mechanical knowledge then education imparted through such adults will follow a problematic pattern. Therefore, it is imperative that the teachers and parents, both, are trained to understand their own strength and weaknesses, before they begin to play a role in the child's life.

This kind of understanding will enable them with strategies to regulate their emotions, thoughts and conduct, which is essential because they need to be effective role models for children, who are constantly emulating them. An educator lacking in positivity, inner harmony, inner strength, confidence, creativity, subject expertise, imagination and scientific thinking will be ill-equipped to be a teacher or a parent. Therefore, only when educators begin to focus on self-education, continuously and sufficiently, will the Indian system of education begin to strengthen.

For a comprehensive education revolution two more aspects need to be undertaken; one is inclusion of in-depth understanding of child behaviour, child psychology, learning differences, learning difficulties and the other is the development of robust indigenous curriculums.

Teachers need to be trained to

understand that they are not imparting knowledge but only facilitating knowledge acquisition for students who are independent individuals deserving of equal respect and dignity. Once this is established, the educators will be able to chart out their role in the child's learning journey appropriately.

As far as the design, content and delivery of a vigorous curriculum is concerned, it must take into consideration India's educational infrastructural capacities, aspirations of the Indian people, Indian student demographics like children's age, learning difficulties, children's interest and the socio-economic settings.

The end goal of such a curriculum should be to develop in children an interest for discoveries, application of the mind, self-worth, healthy body, life skills, value for one's culture, empathy and respect for all and love for life-long learning.

The current trend of importing foreign curriculums such as IB, IGCSE and partnerships with foreign universities are not the alternative to our progressively deteriorating state board, national boards and universities. There are two reasons for this -- firstly, because these imported curriculums are unaffordable for most people of our country and secondly, because we are capable of developing something far richer.

Author Sahana Singh through her book *The Educational Heritage of Ancient India: How an Ecosystem of*

Learning was Laid to Waste has done a great service to the people of India, by transporting us back to an era when India fuelled a knowledge revolution in the world.

This gives us hope that we can do it again. The Indian people, historically, have attended to matters of teaching and learning with a sense of sacredness, she says. It is enlightening to know that about 1000 years back, India was considered the educational capital of the world. Indian universities and ashrams followed a multi-disciplinary approach and were places of learning and teaching that had something for everyone.

According to the author's research, the University of Takshila, which is known to have existed atleast around 6th century BC, Vikramshila

University, Nalanda University, Kanthaloor University (also known as the Nalanda of the South) were apparently only some of the universities of the time for which students from world over sought admission, similar to how Indian students today are frantically seeking admission into Oxford University or Ivy League Colleges.

Ashrams like that of Rishi Vyasa or Rishi Vishwamitra were led by a male or even a female guru who doubled up as parents. Each ashram helped the shishya to master in a subject type and proceed to another ashram for another subject, this was the process followed to attain the degree.

Well-established ecosystems were in place to support the universities. For instance, the Nalanda University

was funded by 100 villages surrounding it. It had state of the art infrastructure, a library nine storey tall, eight lecture halls with 100 lectures a day and not a single lecture missed by any student. With a capacity of around 8500 to 10000 students and 1500 teachers, it had a brilliant teacher-student ratio of around six students to a guru.

The current system in our country is disabling the teachers and the students alike. The government recognised BEd besides being devoid of several important components suffers from the problem of content and problem of delivery.

Its content focuses on the adolescent age group and the few elements that focus on child psychology are largely inaccurate or crudely presented. This programme does not even have the flexibility a in-service teacher or a working parent would ideally need. Such factors make this degree very unattractive for those teachers who care about quality of education.

The Indian education today needs to be overhauled to include elements that support life-long education for teachers, teacher remuneration being commensurate to their hard work and that which makes student's learning experiences joyful. Two things the Covid-19 pandemic has woken up Indian educators are that technology and education cannot be kept separated and the fact that "what we know is not all that is there".

The writer is an independent educationist

PLUS POINTS

Overcoming challenges



In order to give a digital makeover to a tribal village in Chhattisgarh, a group of faculty members and students are working in IIIT Naya Raipur. In this recent endeavour, IIIT-NR in collaboration with IIT Kharagpur and IIT Kanpur has received a research fund of Rs 2.1 crore from CC&BT R&D division of ministry of electronics and IT (MeitY), government of India. Apty titled as the "TribeConnect", the three-year project aims to make the tribals self-dependent and empowered when it comes to their daily needs of healthcare and agricultural practices. The goal of the project is to transform a current tribal village toward a smart full-grown village using the latest IoT-AI technology.

Worthy webinar



Sanskriti University organised a webinar on "Present and future trends in IOT" recently. The Internet of Things (IOT) has become a buzzword in the field of business and information technology and hence this was chosen to be the theme of the webinar. The key speaker was Dr Vrince Vimal, who is currently serving as professor and dean of research at Graphic Era Hill University, Dehradun, Uttarakhand. He gave an exceptional description about the current and future usage of IOT in our personal and professional lives. The curious students asked multiple questions which were answered meticulously by him at the end of the session with real life examples. The session was very informative and was coordinated by Dean-SOET Dr Suresh Kaswan.

Welcoming students



Israel has announced that new international students would be permitted to enter the country to commence their academic studies in 2020-2021. The announcement follows a government enacted restriction in mid-March that prevented non-Israeli visitors from entering the country. A flight from Mumbai to Tel Aviv was recently organised by Bar Ilan University which brought 100 returning and new PhD and post-doctoral scholars at all eight research universities who were unable to travel to Israel due to the grounding of flights between the two countries during the pandemic. Israeli universities and colleges are still accepting applications for this upcoming year and the fall semester in Israel begins in mid-October. For details, visit: <https://studyisrael.org.il/>

Upgrading curriculum



The ASM Group of Institutes announced that it will adopt cloud computing curricula from the Amazon Web Services (AWS) Educate global initiative into its mainstream college syllabus to help develop the next generation of cloud professionals recently. The cloud computing content from AWS Educate will be offered as part of the master of business administration (MBA)/ postgraduate diploma in management (PGDM) in emerging technologies starting in August 2020.

The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) approved two year MBA/ PGDM is a unique programme that enables students to learn cutting edge in-demand skills in emerging technologies such as cloud computing, artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML), big data, and data science. Those having three/four years bachelor's degree in IT, computer application, computer science, electronics, or electricals and telecommunication can apply. For details visit: <https://aws.amazon.com/education/aws-educate/>

EMBRACING THE NEW NORMAL

The lockdown can be viewed as Nature's gift to humankind to reboot, re-prioritise, introspect and set one's ethical and professional compass right



SAMIT RAY

The world is going through an extraordinary crisis of unparalleled dimensions and naturally the education sector is no different. Some 540 million students from elementary to research levels in India are studying or trying to study from home. Given the factor that there is much uncertainty regarding how long this situation prevails, we must get used to this new normal and get ourselves on to the task of teaching learning online through various digital platforms. The following are my top 10 suggestions for effectively doing so today when we are home-locked in the collective interest of all.

● In these trying times, a smart phone with data, a stable wifi-connection and a laptop with inbuilt camera is simply a must for a digital learning experience of good quality.

● For digital learning, one must have an active habit of browsing portals, being an active member of some social media (Facebook for experience sharing, Instagram for visuals sharing, LinkedIn for professional networking, YouTube for films and video explainers, and Twitter for short messaging of news and views). This will help to attend live sessions on informative issues as well.

● One should be conversant in attending Zoom sessions for live class or webinar experience, and even better, if one can generate Zoom sessions which are free up to 40 minutes. Though a maximum of 100 people can attend a Zoom session, it is best organised with 30 to 40 participants at a time.

● It is important to develop an email etiquette to address the recipient properly, end mails in a befitting manner, give a body-copy to communication, and write briefly in bullet points almost identifying the core issues of one's problems or learning needs. Similarly, there is a web-discussion etiquette of not speaking out of turns, not speaking over someone, muting one's speaker phone when someone talks, and raising hand to make a point and waiting for the chance to speak calmly.

● One can download diverse videos, watch minutely while listening to academic discussions, noting down key points, and ideally repeat, watching a second time to capture points missed out the first time.

● There will be an added advantage if one is

aware of the basics of Adobe Premier and may use iVideo or WeVideo to create short explanatory videos or statement of his/her understanding of a subject discussed digitally, apart from knowing how to make a good visually rich power-point presentation and an excel sheet as needed.

● Efficiency is required in recording video and audio, use WhatsApp to share files even after compression, and conduct co-created collaborative study resources digitally. Even videos, podcasts (audio content), ppts, pdfs etc can be shared on this messaging app individually or to a group. However, while using it, special care must be taken to avoid false, doubtful content or defamatory videos among other things.

● One can create separate folders for each course, and save ppts, pdfs, videos, podcasts etc of that course chronologically in order of the chapters or units in the syllabus in the folder so that each of them can be easily assessed as required during course revision.

● Students can allot around eight to ten hours a day, dividing the time between listening, reading online, attending Google class, a zoom session (or Microsoft Meets, Webex meets or GoToMeetings as the case may be), watching videos, filing and preserving, and preparing notes based on all the inputs collected.

● One might consider registering for free or by paying small fees for good courses relevant to one's domain of learning, beyond what mentors are teaching and sharing. These can be Khan Academy videos and explainers, Course Era courses done in collaboration with several American universities, Swayam courses by UGC, MOOCs, to name a few. These will give additional skills and certification and make one a pro in digital learning.

● Digital learning also requires one to take at least a 10 minutes break after every hour -- stretch yourself, have a little walk, sip on a cup of tea or juice, etc, among other things. This will keep one from getting back pain, neck ache or getting fat accumulated.

The lockdown can be welcomed as a gift of nature to reboot oneself, set one's ethical and professional compass right, re-prioritise, introspect, plan, and take a leap in life and work thereafter. Best wishes for an intensively engaging journey with oneself, and with others digitally.

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Postal Reg. No. DL (ND)-17/6088/2018/-19-20

THUMBNAILS

Fresh test: Golfer SSP Chawrasia will go for another round of Covid-19 tests on Tuesday to stay on the safe side after being deemed positive for the deadly virus last week, disrupting his plans to compete on the European Tour. Chawrasia tested positive on Friday.

Pak hope: Wasim Akram says Pakistan can learn from the West Indies' mistakes in their 1-2 defeat by the hosts and perform well in their new series in England. The two teams are scheduled to play three Tests and as many Twenty20 Internationals from Wednesday.

Akhtar's claim: Shoaib Akhtar has claimed that he turned down a 175,000-pound county contract with Nottinghamshire to fight in the 1999 battle against India in Kargil. It was fought at an altitude of around 16,000 feet where 1,042 Pakistani soldiers died.

Fifa protests: Fifa has said there is no reason for Swiss authorities to launch criminal proceedings against its president Gianni Infantino who will continue in his role as normal. A case was launched against the current Fifa boss by a special prosecutor earlier.

Positive test: South Africa's Olympic 400m champion Wayde van Niekerk tested positive for Covid-19 in Italy last week. Van Niekerk, who romped to Olympic gold four years ago in a world-record time of 43.03 seconds, was set to participate in a meet in Trieste.

Drogba's bid: Didier Drogba drew a large crowd on Saturday to watch him submit his candidacy before the deadline for next month's Ivory Coast Football Federation polls. The 42-year-old former African Footballer of the Year is one of four candidates seeking the job.

Tipping point: Frank Lampard felt the season came to a "tipping point" for Chelsea in the FA Cup final, as injuries mounted and the performance level dropped. His side were beaten 2-1 by Arsenal at Wembley despite taking an early lead, thanks to Christian Pulisic.

On hold: South Africa's director of cricket Graeme Smith does not expect the national team to be back in action until November at the earliest and confirmed the scheduled tour of the West Indies has been postponed indefinitely. The West Indies were optimistic.

Tokyo Olympics: Next year's coronavirus-postponed Olympics could be held in front of a "limited number of spectators" to prevent the spread of infection, Tokyo 2020 chief executive Toshirō Muto has said. The Games are scheduled to open on 23 July, 2021.

New role for Trott: Former batsman Jonathan Trott has been appointed England's batting coach for the upcoming three-Test series against Pakistan, starting Wednesday. The 39-year-old, who scored 3835 runs in 52 Tests between 2009-2015 for England, will be joined by former New Zealand spinner Jeevan Patel and Warwickshire seamer Graeme Welch, the 'BBC' reported.

Rankings race: Skipper Azhar Ali and his deputy Babar Azam will be aiming to move up the ladder in the ICC Test rankings when Pakistan take on England in the three-match series starting on Wednesday. According to latest rankings, Azhar, presently 27th among batsmen, will be hoping to regain the form that lifted him to a career-best sixth in December 2016, while Babar will be hoping to progress from a career-best aggregate of 800 rating points.

SPOILT FOR CHOICE

England have the luxury of six specialist pacemen in their 14-man squad for this week's first Test against Pakistan at Old Trafford -- a welcome "headache" for captain Joe Root (in photo, left). The skipper can call on veteran new-ball partners James Anderson and Stuart Broad, the express pace of Jofra Archer and Mark Wood and the impressive Sam Curran and Chris Woakes.

NCA chief Dravid likely to head COVID Task force

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 3 AUGUST

The BCCI is forming a COVID-19 task force and it will include, among others, former captain and National Cricket Academy chief Rahul Dravid (*in photo*), the apex body said in its SOP to state associations. Dravid being the head of NCA is likely to be the head of the said task force. Players will have to sign a consent form before resuming training at their respective centres as per the standard operating procedure, which bars anyone above 60 years of age and individuals with underlying medical conditions from being part of the camp. For resumption of training at the NCA in Bengaluru, the COVID task force will include Dravid, a medical officer, a hygiene officer and BCCIAGM, Cricket Operations. Their responsibilities will include communicating "clearly and regularly with the players, explaining measures being taken to manage risk, and the advice being given to individuals to follow the same and update of COVID19 cases to relevant higher management". Like the players at their respective state centres, cricketers at the NCA too will have to sign a consent form before resuming training. "All the Players and staff including administrative staff of NCA shall be tested for

COVID-19 (RT-PCR test) to detect the possibility of COVID 19 infection before the resumption of training," as per the SOP. "Prior to the commencement of National Cricket Academy, the players shall submit a written undertaking to abide by all the protocols prescribed in this SOP and various Government orders issued from time to time in the context of COVID19 prevention." According to its 100-page-long SOP, the players will have to sign the form acknowledging the risks involved with resumption of training amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2019-2020 domestic season ended in March but the upcoming season, which usually starts in August, is set to be curtailed due to the health crisis. "The health and safety of players, staff and stakeholders will be the sole responsibility of respective State Cricket Associations," read the BCCI guidelines on resumption of cricket, which is in PTT's possession.

BCCI not to punish players for age fudging, two-year ban otherwise

The BCCI on Monday said it will grant amnesty to registered players who voluntarily declare any age fraud but those found to be in breach of the unusual scheme could be slapped with a two-year suspension. The measures will be applicable to all cricketers



participating in the board's age-group tournaments from the 2020-21 season onwards. "Under this scheme, players who voluntarily declare that they have manipulated their date of birth by submitting fake/tampered documents in the past will not be suspended and allowed to participate in the appropriate age group level if they disclose their actual date of birth (DOB)," the BCCI said in a release. "Players have to submit a signed letter/email along with supporting documents to BCCI Age Verification Dept. revealing their actual DOB before 15th September 2020." The apex body also made it clear that if the players don't accept it now and are later found to be guilty of age fraud then they will be heavily sanctioned. "However, if registered players do not disclose

BCCI SOP: 60-plus Arun Lal can't coach Bengal, Baroda may miss Whatmore

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 3 AUGUST

The BCCI's Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for state associations bars 60-plus individuals from taking part in the training camp, potentially affecting Arun Lal and Australian Dav Whatmore, who are coaches of Bengal and Baroda respectively. Whatmore, 66, was appointed in April while Lal, 65, guided Bengal to the Ranji Trophy final in March. "Individuals who are over the age of 60 years, viz support staff, umpires, ground staff and those individuals with underlying medical conditions such as diabetes, weakened immunity, should be considered vulnerable

and are believed to have higher risk of severe COVID-19," read one of the guidelines from BCCI's 100-page SOP, which is in possession of PTT. "All such individuals should be discouraged from participating in camp activities unless suitable guidelines are issued by the government," it stated. Both Lal and Whatmore won't be able to join the pre-season training camp. CAB president Avishek Dalmiya was unavailable for a comment but a senior BCCI official said, "This is SOP. It will be very difficult for any team to breach the protocols. It is unfortunate that someone like Lal ji or Whatmore might have to miss out," the official said.

the facts and are found to have submitted fake/tampered DOB proof documents by BCCI, then they will be banned for 2 years, and after completion of 2-year suspension, they will not be allowed to participate in age group tournaments of BCCI, as well as, age group tournaments organized by the State Units." The BCCI also said that "all cricketers committing Domicile fraud, including senior men & women, will be banned for 2 years" and "voluntary disclosure scheme does not apply

Hamilton says his 'heart almost stopped' after last-lap puncture

JACK DE MENEZES
LONDON, 3 AUGUST

Lewis Hamilton (*in photo*) said that his "heart almost stopped" when his Mercedes suffered a puncture on the final lap of the British Grand Prix after the reigning world champion nursed his ailing car home to take a seventh career Formula One win at Silverstone. The six-time champion looked to be cruising to a regulation victory over teammate Valtteri Bottas, with Mercedes continuing their dominance of the season so far in mighty form as they kept the Red Bull of Max Verstappen at bay. But Bottas saw his front-left tyre delaminate on the penultimate lap just as he passed the pits, forcing him to limp around the entire circuit and drop out of the points with an eventual 11th-place finish. The same happened to Hamilton on the final lap, but with race victory within his grasp, he continued to complete the final lap and fend off the rapidly-closing Verstappen by fewer than six seconds. "Up until that last lap, everything was smooth sailing," Hamilton said. "When I heard Valtteri's tyre went I looked at mine and everything seemed fine. "The car was still turning, and the last laps I started to back off and then the tyre deflated. "That was definitely a heart-in-the-mouth kind of feeling, because I wasn't quite sure if it had gone



down until I hit the brakes, and you could see the tyre was falling off the rim. "Then just driving it, trying to keep the speed up, because sometimes it will fly off and break the wing and all these different things. Oh my God, I was just praying to try and get around and not be too slow. "I nearly didn't get around the last two corners, but thank God we did. (I) really owe it to the team. "I think ultimately maybe we should have stopped towards the end once we saw the delaminations. "I had never experienced anything like that on the last lap. My heart almost stopped." Red Bull were left to rue their decision to pit Verstappen on the penultimate lap in an effort to secure the fastest lap, and although the Dutchman was able to secure the additional point on offer with his final tour, he missed out on a certain victory. THE INDEPENDENT

Delhi could see two teams in next I-League: AIFF president

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 3 AUGUST

All India Football Federation (AIFF) president Praful Patel on Monday said Delhi could see two I-League teams in the upcoming season. AIFF recently invited bids from non-I-League cities, including Delhi, Ranchi, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Bhopal, Lucknow and Ahmedabad, to take part in the 2020-21 season. The previous season of the league saw 11 clubs, including AIFF's developmental outfit Indian Arrows, take part in the competition. However, reigning champions Mohun Bagan have merged with ATK and will play in the Indian Super League (ISL) from the upcoming season. "Clubs from Delhi will be a reality soon in Hero I-league and there may be two teams from Delhi. I am personally looking into this aspect and no doubt Delhi football deserves a big focus being the capital city," Patel said during a programme organised by Football Delhi to mark the 36th birthday of India captain Sunil Chhetri. He also highlighted the progress the AIFF has made over the last decade while emphasising on the need to "professionalise the sport". "We have come a long way. Globally FIFA now acknowledges that Indian football has to be supported and strengthened for the sport to grow in the region. FIFA and AFC have made it clear that football has to be commercially viable and it has to support the overall ecosystem around it," he said.

"That is why it is important to professionalise the sport. The Hero I-League was the first step towards that. Now, the Hero ISL has taken it further and made more additions to Indian football," Patel added. Chhetri said he received the "best birthday gift" when Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju announced the formation of five zonal committees to hunt talent across the country. "I am really honoured to have my birthday celebrated as Delhi Football Day. It is like a dream, when you start playing, you never dream that your birthday will be made so special and for that I am really thankful to Football Delhi. "Sports Minister Shri Kiren Rijiju making a commitment here to locate every football talent in India and if every talent is identified and nurtured well then half of the problem of Indian football is solved. It is the best birthday gift I can ask for," Chhetri said. The skipper added that in a vast country like India finding talent is not an issue. Football Delhi president Shaji Prabhakaran said the state association was delighted to receive such an overwhelming response. "It was very encouraging to hear from the distinguished speakers the potential of Indian football in general and Delhi football in particular. "It was a perfect way to celebrate the birthday of Sunil Chhetri and we are honoured by the overwhelming response and attention Delhi football is receiving through this E-Summit," Prabhakaran said.

Broad considered retiring after being dropped for first Test

THE INDEPENDENT
LONDON, 3 AUGUST

Stuart Broad (*in photo*) has revealed he was so disheartened after being dropped for England's first Test match against the West Indies last month that he considered retiring from cricket. Broad, 34, joined the team for the second and third Tests and was one of England's best performers as they fought back to claim the series 2-1. "Were there thoughts of retirement going round my head? One hundred percent, because I was so down," he told the Daily Mail. "I was expecting to play, which is always a bit of a dangerous thing in sport, but I felt I deserved to play. I have not really told anyone this, but I was so down that week of the first Test," he said. "I was really low. I was stuck in that hotel. I couldn't go anywhere (due to coronavirus-enforced restrictions). "I wasn't playing, I was staying in a single room. I didn't sleep for two days. I was nowhere. A different decision could definitely have been made with my emotions of how I was feeling." Broad said his family had helped him to get through the difficult period, as did Ben Stokes, who captained England for the first time during the first Test. "Stokesy was brilliant," Broad said. "Stokesy knocked on my door on the Thursday night and stayed in the corridor to talk to me. He said: 'This isn't about cricket, but



how are you, mate?" That was very impressive for him to do. "In this modern world, sometimes face-to-face comfort can get lost. I have always had a huge amount of respect for Stokes and I will be friends with him for life, but what he did almost added to that." On the final day of England's series against the West Indies, Broad became the seventh player in history to take 500 Test wickets. Later in the day, he claimed his 501st to seal victory for Joe Root's team.

Baird's target

Jonny Baird's target move into an unassailable lead against Ireland in the Royal London series on Saturday with a barnstorming 82 from 41 balls before admitting he hoped to earn

a Test recall through the Bob Willis Trophy. Baird needed just 21 balls to reach his fifty at the Ageas Bowl to equal the record for the fastest one-day international half-century by an England batsman first set by Eoin Morgan against Australia two years ago. The Yorkshireman's departure sparked a middle-order wobble that saw England lurch from 131 for three to 137 for six, but Sam Billings (46no) and David Willey (47no) put on an unbroken 79 to lead the hosts to a four-wicket victory in 32.3 overs. While Baird, who clubbed 14 fours and two sixes in his belligerent innings, continues to prove he is among the most accomplished white-ball openers around, he was quizzed afterwards about how he rates his Test prospects. Despite being included in a red-ball training group prior to the #raise the bat series against the West Indies, he was a high-profile omission from the squad which claimed a 2-1 victory. And while a Test return seems to be high on his list of priorities, Baird is well aware he will need several eye-catching performances for Yorkshire in the inaugural and one-off Bob Willis Trophy to force his way back in. He said: "I'll be going back and playing for Yorkshire in the four-day comp. I'll be trying my best, that's all I can do, to put myself back in the shop window to be selected in the Test squad again."

'Premier League's trip to West Asia will be fraught with serious risks'

PULAKESH MUKHOPADHYAY
KOLKATA, 3 AUGUST

The Indian Premier League's trip to West Asia, if allowed by the Centre, is going to be fraught with such a high risk that the game, honestly, is not worth the candle. Or, so says a former scientific officer of the Sports Authority of India in its eastern Indian centre in Salt Lake City who was a cricketer herself when younger. Dr Laila Das, asked if holding the tournament in the United Arab Emirates didn't imply a huge risk, told *The Statesman*: "Yes, quite

obviously. Anyone knows it by now that one of the central features of the global fight against the coronavirus pandemic anywhere is the little matter of restrictions on human movement. The less we move around, the greater will be our chances of survival. That explains all those shutdowns. But here we are, taking a whole lot of people there, hoping to get by. No matter what elaborate and expensive plans they decide on for player safety, the sheer fact that so many players, officials, umpires and support staff members will undertake a travel to a foreign land



with the virus lurking about everywhere is a scary thing. And any bio-safe bubble is as bad

as its weakest link. The slightest of slip-ups can presage disaster. Just because England

have got away with it during their recent in-camera series against the West Indies doesn't mean it can be practised everywhere with a similar success quotient. There are risks in the airport lounge and even inside the aircraft. Also, we've been alerted to the airborne doom the virus can be in addition to its tactile menace. I think they're being hasty. We've to consider that our best players, including national captain Virat Kohli (in photo) will be there."

The Board of Control for Cricket in India, of course, has devised its off-to-the-UAE

project under economic compulsions, with the putting off of the Twenty20 World Cup salvaging the Indian tournament from unforeseen uncertainties. She agreed that it was not as if the UAE was blissfully unaffected by the viral scourge. "It's everywhere," she said, adding: "The thing about those countries is that the workforce in them is mostly from southern Asia and it's badly hit by the coronavirus."

While IPL cricketers may not be exposed to the hoi polloi, the fact that the killer disease is around the corner

cannot induce confidence. Dr Das was supportive of the SAI's efforts to ease India's medal aspirants in other disciplines back into training. "The SAI is planning its programmes astutely. It's resourceful enough and its athletes are very safe wherever they are under strict restrictions on their everyday movement. There are risks all right: the use of the same gym equipment by several people in a place, swimmers splashing into the same pool. But the SAI has been sedate and steady, in contrast to cricketer's fast-forward ways, Dr Das said.

