

IN BRIEF

1 held for abducting 25-day-old baby

New Delhi: A woman was arrested on Monday for allegedly abducting a 25-day-old baby boy in north Delhi's Lahori Gate area with an intent of giving him to her childless daughter, police said. The incident came to light after a woman, 25, lodged a missing report of her baby. She told police that on the intervening night of Sunday and Monday, she was sleeping with her two sons on a footpath near Gole Hatti, Khari Baoli, a senior police officer said. When she woke up around 4 am, she could not find her baby. She tried to search for the infant, but could not find him. Thereafter, she lodged a complaint at the Lahori Gate police station, he said. During investigation, police analysed CCTV footage of the area and noticed a 58-year-old woman stealing the baby. Later, she was arrested and the missing infant recovered, the officer said. Interrogation revealed that the accused woman runs a stall in Khari Baoli area. She has two married daughters and one of her daughters, 23, married a man in Agra, and has no child, police said.

Man duped on job pretext, 4 arrested

Noida: Three Uttarakhand-based people, including a woman, have been arrested for allegedly duping a man from Noida on the pretext of giving him a job in a software firm, police said on Monday. Besides the fraud, the accused trio was also involved in burglaries, they said, adding that as it recovered household items and jewellery from them. "On August 22, a Sector 26 resident approached the local police, alleging he had been duped by some people who had promised him a job at a senior position in an IT firm. They even arranged a fake job interview over phone for the victim," a police spokesperson said. The police, however, did not mention the amount of money involved in the fraud. An FIR was lodged at Sector 20 police station and probe taken up, which led the police to accused Shyam Sundar, his wife Sonia Bharadwaj, and Devendra, all residents of Dehradun in Uttarakhand, the spokesperson said.

History-sheeter held after encounter

Noida: A history-sheeter was arrested after an encounter with the police in which he got shot in the leg in Greater Noida, officials said on Monday. The gunfight broke out near Dadri late on Sunday night after the accused, who was on a motorcycle along with his accomplice, got intercepted during a police check in the area, the officials said. The accused identified as Ankit, a resident of adjoining Bulandshahr district, was arrested while his partner managed to escape, DCP, Greater Noida, Rajesh Kumar Singh said. "During checking, they tried to flee the spot and opened fire. Ankit was hit in one of his legs by the police and held. He was taken to a hospital for treatment," Singh said.

Jindal Law to begin online classes today

New Delhi: The Jindal Global Law School (JGLS) based in Sonapat, Haryana, will begin its new academic session with online classes on Tuesday, September 1. Over 1,500 new students have joined the six different academic degree programmes at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. This year's student enrolment at JGLS has been the most significant in a decade and since its founding in 2009 and has witnessed an incredible over 70 per cent increase from last year, it said in a press release. JGLS has also hired over 90 new full-time faculty members, that will take its total strength of full-time faculty to over 400. JGLS, a part of the O.P. Jindal Global University, offers a five-year BA/BBALLB (Hons) programme, a three-year LLB programme, a one-year LLM residential and non-residential programme and two new degree programmes launched this year — LLM in Corporate and Financial Law and BA (Hons) in Legal Studies. When most law entrance exams are yet to be held and the admissions process in law schools showing no sign of starting, JGLS will begin its classes for all six academic programmes in an online mode in compliance with government regulations.

Don't charge beyond tuition fees: Govt warns schools

'Hike in school fee is an inhumane act' ■ Annual, development charges can be charged

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG. 31

The Delhi government has warned private schools against collecting additional charges other than tuition fee and also asked them not to raise the fees till schools reopen, officials said Monday. The government has warned that the defaulter schools will be penalized as per Delhi School Education Act and Rules, 1973.

In a letter to school principals, education department director Udit Prakash Raj said such act of schools is not only in a clear violation of directions issued earlier but also an inhumane act on their part keeping in view the prevailing Covid pandemic conditions and long closure of schools.

"These schools are run by trust and charitable societies, hence, as per their Memorandum of Article, are supposed always to keep in mind the charity and providing of education to the students without indulging in profiteering," he said.

He said some representations have also been received from some private schools and their associations wherein, it has been claimed that since the period of lockdown is over, they can charge the fees under all heads such as tuition fees, annual charge, development fee and some ear-

marked levies also.

"This is not correct as unlocking stage is still going on in a phased manner, hence, complete lockdown is yet to be over and schools are yet to be Open for physical class room learning," he added.

Universities and schools across the country have been closed since March 16 when the central government announced a nationwide classroom shutdown as one of the measures to contain the Covid outbreak.

A nationwide lockdown was announced on March 24, which came into effect the next day. While the government has eased several restrictions, schools and colleges continue to remain closed.

According to the directive by the Directorate of Education (DoE), annual and development charges can be charged from the parents, on pro-rata basis, only on monthly basis after completion of lockdown period.

"No earmarked levies such as transportation charges will be charged from the parents during the period the schools remains closed. In no case, the schools shall demand and collect tuition fee on quarterly basis, fees will be collected on monthly basis only. Schools cannot increase any fee in the academic session 2020-21 till further directions," the DoE order had earlier said.



Kids play on a marriage band buggy lying abandoned at a field in New Delhi on Saturday. The brass band providers and artistes are facing hardship due to Covid as authorities have not yet allowed bands in weddings. — PTI

1,358 cases takes city's tally to over 1.74 lakh

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG. 31

Delhi recorded 1,358 fresh Covid cases on Monday, taking the tally to over 1.74 lakh, while the death toll mounted to 4,444, authorities said.

Eighteen fatalities have been recorded in the last 24 hours, according to the

latest bulletin issued by the Delhi Health department.

However, the number of tests conducted on Monday was 14,389, much lower than the average 20,000 done per day.

On Sunday, Delhi had recorded 2,024 fresh cases, the highest single-day spike in the city in August.

Home minister Amit Shah discharged from AIIMS

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG. 31

After being admitted to AIIMS for post-Covid care, home minister Amit Shah was discharged after 13 days. During his stay in AIIMS, the

home minister was attending to all his official work from the hospital itself. Ministry officials claimed that Mr Shah was likely to once again attend his North Block office in the next couple of days.

Mr Shah was discharged from AIIMS on early Monday. He was admitted to AIIMS on August 18 after he complained of "fatigue and body ache" having recovered from corona.

Will pay ₹1 fine, but have right to file review plea: Bhushan

New Delhi, Aug. 31: Activist lawyer Prashant Bhushan said on Monday that he will submit the token fine of ₹1 imposed by the Supreme Court in the contempt case for his tweets against the judiciary, but also indicated he would file a review plea against the order.

Mr Bhushan said he has the greatest respect for the institution of the Supreme Court and judiciary and his tweets were not intended to disrespect the apex court.

"While I reserve the right to seek a review of the conviction and sentencing, by way of an appropriate legal remedy, I propose to submit myself to this order and will respectfully pay the fine, just as I would have submitted to any other lawful punishment," he said hours after the top court imposed the fine.

"I have had the greatest respect for the institution of the Supreme Court. I have always believed it to be the last bastion of hope, particularly for the weak and the oppressed who knock at its door for the protection of their rights, often against a powerful



Senior advocate Prashant Bhushan with activist Yogendra Yadav. — Biplob Banerjee

executive," Bhushan said at a press conference by CJAR (Campaign for Judicial Accountability & Reforms) and Swaraj Abhiyan.

He said the tweets were not intended in any way to disrespect the Supreme Court or the judiciary as a whole, but were merely meant to express his anguish which he felt, "was a deviation from its sterling past record".

The issue was never about "me versus the Judges, much less about me versus the Supreme

Court", he said.

A bench headed by Justice Arun Mishra asked Bhushan on Monday to deposit the fine by September 15, failing which he will attract a jail term of three months and debarment from law practice for three years.

Freedom of speech cannot be curtailed but rights of others need to be respected, said the bench, also comprising Justices B.R. Gavai and Krishna Murari, which held him guilty of contempt earlier this month. — PTI

‘Suspended AAP leader’s cash source dubious’ Delhi riots : ED arrests Tahir Hussain

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI AUG. 31

The ED on Monday arrested suspended Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) councillor, Tahir Hussain, in connection with its probe into a money laundering case related to the communal violence in northeast Delhi in February.

Sources said, "Hussain has been arrested by the ED in connection with the ongoing PMLA investigation into his role in money



Tahir Hussain

laundry and funding of anti-CAA protests and organising riots in Northeast Delhi in February 2020". ED's money laundering investigation is

based on multiple FIRs registered by the Crime Branch of Delhi Police.

"ED's investigation under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) has revealed that companies owned/controlled by Tahir Hussain and his relatives transferred huge amounts of money to dubious entities/entry operators which was returned by them in cash", sources said. The cash received by Tahir Hussain through

entry operators was used to fuel the anti-CAA protests and Delhi riots, they added. The central probe agency claimed that investigation also revealed involvement of Tahir Hussain and his companies in illegal laundering of money in the past as well. Searches had been conducted at the residential and business premises of Tahir Hussain and his relatives and associates in Delhi, Noida and Greater Noida on June 23, 2020.

Ola, Uber in Delhi-NCR to go on strike from today

New Delhi, Aug. 31: Cab aggregators Ola and Uber in Delhi-NCR will be on a strike from Tuesday demanding extension of the moratorium on loan repayment and a hike in fare in view of the Covid pandemic.

Around 2 lakh drivers of the cab services have given the strike call as their appeals have not led to any action by the gov-

ernment, said Kamaljeet Singh Gill, the president of Sarvodaya Drivers Association of Delhi.

"Due to the acute financial crisis caused by lockdown, drivers are unable to pay their EMIs. The moratorium of loan repayment ended today and the banks are already putting pressure on us. Drivers are scared that banks will tow away their

vehicles for not paying EMIs," Gill said.

The cab drivers have also demanded that fare be hiked and commission increased by Ola and Uber. Gill said the fare should be fixed by the government instead of the cab aggregators. No reaction was immediately available from Ola or Uber on the strike call by the drivers. — PTI

BJP alleges Congress' role in 'dislikes' for Mann Ki Baat video

New Delhi, Aug. 31: The BJP said on Monday that over 98 per cent of the 'dislikes' for the YouTube video posted by the party of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's *Mann Ki Baat* programme came from abroad and alleged involvement of the Congress in this. BJP IT department head

Amit Malviya said, "Over the last 24hrs, there has been a concerted effort to dislike *Mann Ki Baat* on YouTube... So low is the Congress on confidence that it has been celebrating it as some sort of conquest! However, data suggests that only 2 per cent of those dislikes are from India." — PTI

Man shot at, injured over car parking

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG. 31

An 18-year-old boy was shot twice in his leg after he asked a man to park his car properly in South Delhi's Chattarpur area. The incident took place on Sunday night.

The victim has been identified as Prabh Preet Singh, a resident of Chattarpur.

According to DCP (South district) Atul Kumar Thakur, on August 30, a police control room (PCR) call regarding gunshot injuries to a person was received following which an emergency response vehicle (ERV) was dispatched to the spot.

"On reaching the spot, the police team found that the injured had been shifted to

AIIMS. He had received two bullet injuries in his right leg," said the DCP.

"At the hospital, the injured told the police that he along with his friends Raman and Sujal were eating snacks near the election office in Chattarpur when Prabh asked the accused persons to park their car properly. Upon hearing this, the accused

persons got angry and one of them fired upon him," said the DCP.

"Accused Chetan has been apprehended and is being interrogated in the case. Manhunt has been initiated to nab the other accused, identified as Manoj (40), who has been also found involved in three other cases," said a senior police official.

Ex-President Pranab dies: An era ends in Indian politics

■ **Continued from Page 1** manager, reached the top of the pyramid when he became President in 2012. He served as President till 2017. During his long political career, he donned many hats. He served as external affairs minister, finance minister, defence minister, commerce minister, besides being leader of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.

Mukherjee was born on December 11, 1935 at Mirati, a village in the Bengal Presidency of British India (now in Birbhum district of West Bengal). He studied history, political science and law at Calcutta University.

His political journey began in 1969 when became the election manager of V.K. Krishna Menon, who was contesting as an Independent. Impressed by

his managerial and organisational skills, then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi got him into the Congress and sent him to the Rajya Sabha. His rise under Mrs Gandhi was meteoric and over the years he became one of her most trusted lieutenants. At age 47, he became India's youngest finance minister in 1982. He was one of the few leaders who stood by Indira Gandhi when she imposed the Emergency in 1975 and when she split the Congress in 1978. His political rise took a tumble after the assassination of Indira Gandhi in 1984. He fell from favour as then PM Rajiv Gandhi and his coterie felt Mukherjee, as the senior-most Cabinet minister, saw himself as the rightful heir to Indira's throne. As Rajiv took over as PM, he not only

dropped Pranab Mukherjee from the Cabinet but expelled him from the party. In his memoir *The Turbulent Years: 1986-96*, Mukherjee wrote that he was "shellshocked and flabbergasted" as he was excluded from the Cabinet.

On being dropped from the CWC, Mukherjee had recalled: "To my utter shock and dismay, I was dropped from the CWC, when it was reconstituted in January 1986. This was a blow which hurt even more than being dropped from the Cabinet..." Mukherjee then formed his own political party — Rashtriya Samajwadi Congress — in 1986. This turned into a political misadventure.

In 1989, Rajiv Gandhi realised the mistake of excluding the man who was number two in his mother's

Cabinet. Mukherjee was recalled and he merged his outfit with the Congress. Rajiv Gandhi later said many things told to him about Mukherjee were "untrue". In Mukherjee's words — "to return to the question of why he (Rajiv) dropped me from the Cabinet and expelled me from the party, all I can say is that he made mistakes, and so did I. He let others influence him and listed to their calumnies against me. I let my frustration overtake my patience."

After Rajiv Gandhi's assassination, Pranab Mukherjee returned to the government as external affairs minister under P.V. Narasimha Rao, while then RBI governor Mamohan Singh became finance minister. Once again he missed the coveted throne when

Sonia Gandhi chose Dr Manmohan Singh to lead the UPA over him. Even if he was "upset", Mukherjee did not let that influence his work and in 2004-2014 he was heading most of the Groups of Ministers. Speaking at the launch of Mukherjee's book *The Coalition Years*, former PM Manmohan Singh reflected on Sonia Gandhi choosing him over Pranab. "He (Pranab) had reason to feel upset but he respected me and we have a great relationship which will continue till we live." While some blamed Sonia Gandhi for choosing Dr Singh over Mukherjee, there were rumours that it was Rahul Gandhi who took the final call. The Gandhi family, which apparently denied him the top post twice, also seemed reluctant at first

about nominating him for President. Some say the Gandhi family (post-Indira) "could never fully trust Pranab Da". Mukherjee wrote: "The bone of contention about my nomination (was) the same as that in 2007: She told me frankly, 'Pranabji, you are the most eminently suited for the office, but you should not forget the crucial role you are playing in the functioning of the government. Could you suggest an alternative?'"

But then came something which virtually forced Sonia Gandhi's hand to lean towards Mukherjee. Trinamul Congress chief Mamata Banerjee, at a joint press conference with Samajwadi boss Mulayam Singh Yadav said their presidential nominees were A.P.J. Abdul Kalam,

Manmohan Singh and Somnath Chatterjee.

Ms Banerjee revealed Sonia Gandhi proposed the names of Hamid Ansari and Pranab Mukherjee, which were "unacceptable" to them. Realising they could not lose the presidential election, several meetings were held among UPA partners, and the Left parties proposed Mukherjee's name, which was seconded by others. Finally, Mrs Gandhi endorsed his candidature.

Mukherjee wrote in *The Coalition Years*: "After briefing the meeting on the presidential election, Sonia Gandhi bid me an emotional farewell... Thereafter, with a mischievous smile, she looked at me and said: 'Along with that, of course, I will miss some of his tantrums'."

SHORT TAKES

Pranab was like a 'guide' for us: RSS

New Delhi: Condoling the demise of former President Pranab Mukherjee, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat on Monday described him as a "guide" for the Sangh and said he didn't believe in political untouchability. Mukherjee was an able administrator who kept national interest supreme, Mr Bhagwat said in a joint statement along with RSS general secretary Suresh Bhaiyyaji Joshi. Mukherjee didn't practice political untouchability and was respected by all parties, the statement said. "He was a guide for Sangh and was affectionate towards the organisation and his passing away is irreparable loss to the RSS," it added. Pranab was attacked by the Congress itself in June 2018 for attending an event of the RSS, the ideological mentor of the ruling BJP. But later, the Congress was all appreciation after Mukherjee in his speech emphasised that the soul of India is pluralism, tolerance and inclusion. — PTI

He was 'illustrious' son of India: Patnaik

Bhubaneswar: Odisha chief minister Naveen Patnaik on Monday described former President Pranab Mukherjee as an "illustrious" son of India and said that he had vast knowledge on almost all the issues. The CM also said Mukherjee was insightful, prudent and balanced in all his approaches to life. "He had a distinguished political career and was respected and loved by all sections of society for his judicious decisions and unparalleled experience in governance. He will always be remembered for his exceptional ability to forge consensus on national issues. His demise brings an end to a glorious life," the CM said in his condolence message. He also conveyed his deep sympathies to the bereaved family.

State mourning for 7 days in C'garh

Raipur: The Chhattisgarh government on Monday declared state mourning for a period of seven days following the demise of former President Pranab Mukherjee. Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel has termed the death of Mukherjee as an irreparable loss to the nation. "As a mark of respect to the former President Bharat Ratna Pranab Mukherjee, who died on Monday, there will be seven-day state mourning from August 31 to September 6 in the state," an official statement said. During this period, the national flag will be flown at half mast throughout the state, it said. Besides, there will be no government entertainment and cultural programmes during this period, the release said. — PTI

He was 'Ajatshatru of politics': Nitish

Patna: Bihar CM Nitish Kumar, his deputy Sushil Kumar Modi and a host of prominent leaders of the state Monday mourned the death of former President Pranab Mukherjee. Expressing his grief over Mukherjee's death, Kumar in his condolence message called the former President "Ajatshatru (one who has no enemies) of politics" who was equally respected by both ruling and Opposition, an official release said. Mukherjee was a renowned politician, efficient administrator and eloquent speaker and his death marked the end of an era and a "personal loss" for him, the Bihar CM said. I had a very close relation with Mukherjee who guided me on several occasions, Mr Kumar said, adding that his death has caused a void in politics. — PTI

7 civilians injured in J&K grenade hit

Srinagar: Seven pedestrians sustained splinter injuries when a militant tossed a hand grenade towards an Army convoy passing through Aazad Gunj area of Jammu and Kashmir's north-western Baramulla town on Monday. The police and Army officials said that the failed attempt on the Army convoy was made at around 1.15 pm but the grenade thrown at it missed the intended target, fell on the road and exploded causing splinter injuries to civilians. The injured were evacuated to a nearby hospital.

■ A 'veteran insider' in corridors of power ■ Treasure trove of political secrets, he was avid diary writer

Will Dada's 'Red Book' of secrets go with him?

SANJAY BASAK
NEW DELHI AUG. 31

A magazine once described him as "the man who knew too much". Former President Pranab Mukherjee was the "veteran insider" in the corridors of power. The man, who apparently had "the memory of an elephant".

Pranab Mukherjee, the treasure trove of political secrets was an avid diary writer.

Pranab's much-talked about "Red Diary" is apparently the "truthful accounts of his political journey". It is believed that this diary if ever published could actually stir the hornet's nest of contemporary Indian politics.

In his e-book *Akothito Pranab (Untold Pranab)*, journalist and author, Goutam Lahiri wrote that Pranab Mukherjee had said, "My Red Diary will never be published. It will be cremated along with my body." There were speculations that Mukherjee would eventually handover his "Red Diary" to his daughter, Sharmistha Mukherjee.

Pranab Mukherjee's political journey began in West Bengal in 1969 as the election agent for V.K. Krishna Menon, who was contesting a Lok Sabha byelection as an Independent candidate. In his 50-odd years, Pranab was the ultimate insider.

He had a vast network of key political players, cutting across party lines. He was not only close to the CPI(M) leader and the then West Bengal chief minis-

The 'No. 2' man during Indira rule

► **THE MAN**, who was virtually 'number two' during the rule of Indira Gandhi was expelled from the party by her son, Rajiv Gandhi

► **HE HAD** powerful allies and equally powerful enemies. His career experienced the rough and tumble of Indian politics

ter, Jyoti Basu but had often invited RSS chief, Mohan Bhagwat to Rashtrapati Bhawan during his tenure as the President. He had powerful allies and equally powerful enemies. His career experienced the rough and tumble of Indian politics.

The man, who was virtually "number two" during the rule of Indira Gandhi was expelled from the party by her son, Rajiv Gandhi.

Rajiv Gandhi influenced by Congress leaders, like Arun Nehru, A.B.A. Gani Khan Chowdhury, Balaram Jharkhar among the few not merely excluded Mukherjee from Union Council of Ministers but later expelled him. Rajiv Gandhi was told that Pranab Mukherjee nurtured the ambition of being the Prime Minister after the assassination of Indira Gandhi in 1984. Lahiri in his e-book recounts the detail of this "misunderstanding".

Mr Lahiri writes, "Rajiv Gandhi (on his way to Delhi from Bengal) sought Pranab's advice on 'who after Indira'."

Mukherjee reminded that when Jawaharlal Nehru died in 1964 and Lal Bahadur Shastri in 1966,

the seniormost Cabinet minister, Gulzari Lal Nanda was appointed as acting PM. Pranab Mukherjee was number two in Indira Gandhi's Cabinet.

This apparently was distorted and the coterie close Rajiv Gandhi indicated that Pranab was pitching for himself. This was the beginning of Pranab Mukherjee's fall during Rajiv Gandhi's tenure.

However, hit by Bofors Scam, a revolt by V.P. Singh later forced Rajiv Gandhi to get Pranab back into the Congress in 1988.

Sometime before his assassination, Rajiv Gandhi in a magazine interview had confessed, "Things people told me about Pranab Mukherjee were wrong."

The content in the "Red Diary", if ever seen the light of the day, could lift the curtains, which even in his book *The Coalition Years*, Mukherjee refrained from doing. His book displayed caution and actually is not a tell-all memoir.

Pranab Mukherjee had been privy to all the redefining moments in Indian politics ranging from creation and rise of the militant Sikh leader, Jarnail Singh



In this 1998 photo, former President Pranab Mukherjee (clockwise from above) and senior leaders meet the then home minister L.K. Advani. Pranab with former PM Manmohan Singh and others during Parliamentary Awards. Pranab with Sonia Gandhi at an AICC meet. PM Narendra Modi seeks blessings from the former President. — PTI



'He combined his sharp intellect with hard work'

Bengaluru, Aug. 31: Politicians cutting across party lines in Karnataka on Monday condoled the passing away of former President Pranab Mukherjee, with former Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda saying that he always admired the way he combined his sharp intellect with hard work.

"I am saddened to learn the passing away of former President of India, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee. We had a long association spanning decades. I had always admired the way he combined his sharp intellect with hard work. May his soul rest in peace," Mr Gowda tweeted.

Chief minister B.S. Yediyurappa recalled that in his five-decade-long political career, Mukherjee had held several key positions, including defence, finance, external affairs and deputy chairman of the Planning Commission. — PTI

'An era has ended', Didi expresses deep sorrow

Kolkata, Aug. 31: West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee Monday expressed deep sorrow over the death of former president Pranab Mukherjee and said with his demise "an era has come to an end".

She recollected her long association with Mukherjee and extended her condolence to his son and daughter.

"It is with deep sorrow I write this. Bharat Ratna Pranab Mukherjee has left us. An era has ended. For decades he was a father figure. From my first win as MP, to being my senior Cabinet colleague, to his becoming President while I was CM," Banerjee said in a statement released from the state secretariat. "So many memories. A visit to Delhi without Pranab is unimaginable. He is a legend in all subjects from politics to economics. Will be forever grateful. Shall miss him immensely," she added. — PTI

'Left indelible mark on development trajectory'

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG 31

Former President and recipient of India's highest civilian honour Bharat Ratna, Pranab Mukherjee's death was condoled by PM Narendra Modi, who in a series of tweets shortly after his demise, said that he has left an indelible mark on the development trajectory of the nation.

"A scholar par excellence, a towering statesman, he was admired across the political spectrum and by all sections of society. India grieves the passing away of Bharat Ratna Shri Pranab Mukherjee," tweeted Mr Modi. "As India's President, Shri Pranab Mukherjee made Rashtrapati Bhavan even more accessible to common citizens. He made the President's house a centre of learning, innovation, culture, science and literature..." he added.



Pranab Da's book to be out on birth anniv

New Delhi, Aug. 31: Former President Pranab Mukherjee was writing a book that chronicles his journey as India's head of state in exhaustive detail and its release is planned on his birth anniversary later this year, publisher Rupa Publications said on Monday.

The *Presidential Years* would be the fourth to be authored by Pranab. This unique autobiographical account promises to give readers a bird's eye view of the functioning of Rashtrapati Bhavan, the inside story of the issues that made headlines. — PTI

Harassment case against media staff

AGE CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, AUG. 31

The Bandra police have registered a case against a senior employee of a leading media house for allegedly sexually harassing a woman colleague.

The complainant alleged that the accused had touched her inappropriately and sought sexual favours, and when she refused to give in to the demand, she was sacked.

An official said, the woman in her complaint alleged that she was sexually harassed by her senior colleague from April 2008 to August 2020.

Meanwhile, the concerned media house has also filed a cross-complaint of blackmail and criminal intimidation against the woman and

issued a statement through its social media handle calling the allegations "frivolous" and "malicious".

The statement read, "Frivolous and malicious allegations have been levelled against our Management by an ex-employee AFTER TERMINATION OF HER SERVICES due to Non-performance, and Covid related restructuring. There have been no complaints of Harassment by her against any person during her entire tenure of 12 years. This sudden complaint after her services are terminated is a motivated and malicious action. A complaint has already been lodged by us with the Mumbai Police against her for Blackmail and Criminal intimidation (sic)."

WB govt extends Covid curbs in hotspot zones

RAJIB CHOWDHURI
AND PRANMOY
BRAHMACHARI
KOLKATA/BERHAMPORE,
AUG. 31

The Mamata Banerjee government on Monday extended the Covid-19 lockdown by another month — September — in the containment zones of West Bengal, while allowing the Metro services to resume from September 8. State chief secretary Rajiva Sinha said in an order, "Now, in consideration of the current Covid-19 situation, lockdown in containment zones stands extended up to 30/09/2020."

Schools, ICDS centres, colleges, educational, training and coaching institutions, cinema halls, swimming pool, entertainment parks and theatres would remain closed till September 30. Outside the containment



Flight passengers wait at NSCB Airport in Kolkata on Monday during the bi-weekly lockdown in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. — PTI

zones, Metro rail services will resume in a "graded manner" from September 8 and open air weaves from September 21 with necessary permission from local authorities will be allowed.

The number of total lockdown days — September 7, 11 and 12 — remain unchanged. The

state government also directed it's universities to complete their final semester examinations between October 1 and 18. The decision was taken at a virtual meeting between the vice-chancellors and state education minister Partha Chatterjee in view of a Supreme Court order on August 28.

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED GIRL



Savitri

General public is hereby informed that this girl namely Savitri D/o Radhey Shyam R/o H.No. 387, Jhenda Colony, Asola, New Delhi Age : 16 years, Complexion : Fair, Height : 5', Build : Medium, Face : Round, wearing sky blue colour suit, black colour pajami and slipper in feet, missing/kidnapped from her house since 29.07.2020.

In this regard FIR No. 211/20 dated 31.07.2020 u/s 363 IPC has been registered at P.S. Maidan Garhi, New Delhi.

Any person having information or clue about this missing/kidnapped girl may kindly inform to the following:-

E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in
Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>
Fax: 24368639,
Tel.: 24368638/24368641

SHO :
P.S. Maidan Garhi, New Delhi,
Tel. No. 011-8750870825,
7827710234

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

Office of the Executive Engineer, TLMD-IV,
Pampore, JKPTCL Kashmir

Corrigendum to NIT No. TLMD-IV/e-NIT-13 of 2020-21
Dated: 25-08-2020

- Please read J&K Power Transmission Corporation Ltd. Kashmir Instead of Power Development Department.
- Please read Account Officer with Chief Engineer, JKPTCL, Kashmir instead of Account Officer with Chief Engineer, O&M wing, Kashmir, PDD, Complex Bemina Srinagar Kashmir, J&K in the basic NIT.
- Please read Superintending Engineer, O&M Circle-I, JKPTCL, Kashmir instead of Chief Engineer, JKPTCL, Kashmir in Critical Dates row No. 7.

NO: TLMD-IV/ 744-45 Date:28-08-2020

—S/d—
Executive Engineer
TLMD-IV, Pampore (JKPTCL)
DIPK-2039/20 DATED 31.08.20

SHORT TAKES

C'garh: Naxals kill abducted policeman

Bhopal: Suspected Maoists killed an assistant sub-inspector who was abducted by them at Mengapat under Kutru police station in Chhattisgarh's south Bastar district of Bijapur on Sunday evening. Body of Korsa Naigaiya (59), posted in Kutru police station, was recovered at Ketulnar nearly two km from Mengapat on Monday, a senior Bijapur district police officer said. The slain cop had taken a fortnight's leave to visit his home in Dantewada in south Bastar and started for Dantewada on his bike on Sunday evening, police said. He was abducted by Maoists at Mengapat, nearly five km from his place of posting at Kutru. His abduction came to light when the police found his bike abandoned in Mengapat. "A search operation was launched by security forces to rescue him. His body was recovered at a deserted place in Ketulnar. A Maoist leaflet was found near his body," police said.

PDP leaders seek nod to meet Mufti

Srinagar: Four senior Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) leaders on Monday asked authorities to allow them to meet the party's incarcerated president and former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Mehbooba Mufti, who was jailed under the Public Safety Act following the abrogation of Article 370 last year. In a letter to District Magistrate, Srinagar, Shahid Iqbal Chaudhary, the PDP leaders said that Mehbooba has a right to receive visitors as per the Constitution of the country. "PDP chief and ex-CM JK Ms Mehbooba Mufti has been jailed since August 2019 after the illegal abrogation of Article 370 and subsequent bifurcation of the JK into two UTs. Unfortunately, the state administration has not allowed us to meet her since then, despite repeated attempts," Ghulam Nabi Lone, Abdul Rehman Veeri, Khurshid Alam and Aijaz Mir said in their letter.

SSR case: ED grills Goa hotel owner

Mumbai: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Monday grilled Goa businessman Gaurav Arya in connection with actor Sushant Singh Rajput's suicide and possible laundering of his money as per allegations of his father. Arya's name cropped up after some text messages on narcotics substances were allegedly shared between Rhea Chakraborty, the main accused in the case, and him. The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) is also likely to grill Arya in connection with the drugs angle. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) meanwhile grilled Chakraborty for the fourth consecutive day on Monday.

Bhushan fined ₹1 for contempt

■ **Continued from Page 1** administration of justice of which he himself is a part." Speaking for the bench also comprising Justice B.R. Gavai and Justice Krishna Murari, Justice Mishra said, "The court, from the very beginning, was desirous of giving quietus to this matter. Directly or indirectly, the contemnor was persuaded to end this matter by tendering an apology and save the grace of the institution as well as the individual, who is an officer of the court." "However, for reasons best known to him, he has neither shown regret in spite of our persuasion or the advice of the learned Attorney General," Justice Mishra added. Mr Bhushan's conduct, Justice Mishra said, "Reflects adamance and ego, which has no place in the system of administration of justice and in noble profession, and no remorse is shown for the harm done to the institution to which he belongs." Referring to Mr Bhushan releasing his second statement to the media even before it reached the court, and giving interviews, the court said, "If we do not take cognizance of such conduct it will give a wrong message to the lawyers and litigants throughout the country." It then ordered the fine. The top court had on August 14, 2020, held Mr Bhushan guilty of the criminal contempt of court for his two tweets which the court by its August 14, 2020, judgment had said lowered its dignity.

■ 'Congress behind killings' 2 DYFI workers are hacked to death in Kerala

Thiruvananthapuram, Aug. 31: Two activists of the youth wing of the CPI(M) were hacked to death by a gang, with the Marxist party heading the ruling LDF alleging that Congress was behind the killings and the latter rejecting the charge on Monday.

Mithilaj (30) and Haq Muhammed (24) were attacked with sharp edged weapons at Venjaramoodu in this district at around 11.30 pm on Sunday. While Mithilaj died on the spot, the other man succumbed while being taken to a hospital, police said.

Police said they suspected rivalry between the CPI(M) and the Congress workers was the reason for the killings that triggered tension in the area on Onam day.

Condemning the killing of the DYFI workers, chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan ordered a comprehensive probe into the incident. Three people have been taken into custody in connection with the incident, Police said, adding the bodies of the victims had been handed over to relatives after postmortem. The DYFI workers were attacked while they were going to Mithilaj's home on a motorbike. CCTV visuals aired by TV channels showed a gang of assaults attacking the duo. Vijayan, also holding the Home portfolio, directed the police to nab the assailants and investigate the motive behind

GOPALPUR PORT ON EXPANSION MODE, PLANS LNG TERMINAL

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO
BHUBANESWAR, AUG. 31

Odisha's Gopalpur Port, one of the country's major harbours, has planned to set up a liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal and an investment of ₹2,000 crore for setting up fertilizer and petrochemical industries, an official said on Monday.

Similarly, an edible oil refinery is also on cards, the official informed.

Recently, GPL Managing

Choksi and Zakir Naik donated to RGF: BJP

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG. 31

Renewing its attack on the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, headed by Congress interim president Sonia Gandhi, the BJP on Monday alleged that Mehul Choksi involved in Punjab National Bank fraud case, alleged Islamic preacher Zakir Naik, whose foundation is being probed under Prevention of Money Laundering Act, Rana Kapoor of the YES Bank and Jignesh Shah involved in National Spot Exchange Ltd scam, who are also being investigated under the money laundering Act, donated to the RGF as part of a "well thought conspiracy."

BJP national spokesperson Sambit Patra said Mehul Choksi company Geetanjali Group has another company M/s Naviraj Estates which donated ₹24.45 lakh to the RGF on 29 August 2014 while another absconder Zakir Naik's Islamic Research Foundation, which is under investigation under PMLA donated to the RGF, which is was forced to return after it was highlighted in the media.

The BJP also alleged that the RGF which earlier has been in the eye of a storm for receiving donations from China, has received funds from Rana Kapoor of YES Bank and Jignesh Shah of FTIL.

the fatal attack. The CPI(M) and DYFI alleged that Congress workers were behind the killing of DYFI activists, but the opposition party denied any role in it saying the party "does not believe in violence." CPI(M) state Secretary Kodyveri Balakrishnan alleged a high-level conspiracy by Congress leadership behind the attack.

"It is a planned murder. The top leadership of the Congress has a role in it," Balakrishnan alleged.

"The party will observe a "black day" on September 2 in protest against the "brutal killing" of the DYFI workers, he said.

Leader of Opposition in the state assembly Ramesh Chennithala said the Congress had no role in the killings.

"The Congress is not a party of assailants. We don't encourage goons in our party," he said.

The senior Congress leader alleged a "false propaganda" had been unleashed by the state government to blame his party. "The effort by a government, which has lost face due to its misdeeds, to malign the Congress will not succeed," he said. — *PTI*

JEE-Mains exam begins from today

Edu minister urges states to support candidates

New Delhi, Aug. 31: The National Testing Agency (NTA) is all set to conduct the engineering entrance exam JEE-Mains from Tuesday amid elaborate arrangements to maintain social distancing at centres in view of the Covid-19 pandemic.

While the governments of Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh have assured students that they will provide transportation to candidates, a group of IIT alumni and students have also launched a portal to provide transport facilities to exam centres for the candidates in need.

Union minister of education Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' has appealed to the chief ministers of various states to support the students appearing for the exam.

There has been a growing chorus for postponing

► **ALL SEATS** will be thoroughly sanitised and the work stations and key-boards will be disinfected

JEE-Mains and medical entrance exam NEET amid the rising number of Covid-19 cases.

The Joint Entrance Examination (JEE)-Mains for admission to engineering courses in IITs, NITs and Centrally Funded Technical Institutions (CFTIs) is scheduled to be held from September 1 to 6. The National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) is scheduled on September 13.

As many as 8.58 lakh candidates have registered for the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE)-Main and 15.97 lakh have registered for NEET.

"I appeal to chief ministers of all states that support our students in such

unprecedented circumstances and make appropriate arrangements so the aspirants do not have to face any inconvenience. I also appeal to students to have faith in agencies behind conduct of the examination," the Education Minister said.

Increasing the number of examination centres, alternate seating plans, fewer candidates per room and staggered entry and exit are among the steps the National Testing Agency has taken for safely conducting NEET and JEE. According to NTA officials, before the start of each exam shift and after the last shift ends, all seats will be thoroughly sanitised and the work stations and keyboards will be disinfected. "Hand sanitisers will be available at the entrance of the examination centre," an official said. — *PTI*

MP FLOOD

Crops in 7L hectare area damaged: CM

Bhopal, Aug. 31: Excess rainfall and flooding in parts of Madhya Pradesh have damaged crops in seven lakh hectare area of 14 districts, chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said on Monday and assured farmers that all possible measures will be taken to compensate for their losses.

After conducting an aerial survey of the affected areas on Sunday, Mr Chouhan embarked on a boat in Hoshangabad district on Monday to assess the damage caused to crops and other properties due to flooding and heavy downpour in the past few days, sources said.

On the way, the chief minister also interacted with the villagers to know their problems, the sources said.

Before leaving for the survey, Mr Chouhan in an official release said "crops were damaged in nearly seven lakh hectare area in 14 districts of the state."

"Farmers should not get worried about the losses. The government is in action and all possible measures will be taken," he said. — *PTI*

■ Many dream projects washed away in deluge After Covid, guest workers hit hard by Odisha floods

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO
BHUBANESWAR, AUG. 31

The Covid-19 crisis had hit them hard. But their spirit always remained high and they had blatantly refused to surrender to economic challenges posed by the pandemic. However, the high floods in the major river systems of Odisha have convincingly vanquished them. So much so that many of them are staring at dark days ahead if the state government does not take care of them.

First-time rural entrepreneurs and guest workers who had undertaken agriculture activities in the coastal areas of Odisha have lost all their investments as the high floods in the major river system washed away their dream projects.

"I had invested nearly ₹5 lakh on raising a poultry farm. The birds had grown fully and I was about to sell them in the next few days. I was expecting a return of nearly ₹7 lakh. Now, hope is completely shattered as the flood water in the Baitarani river system has washed away my poultry unit. While many birds were washed away, the others met their watery grave," said Rajanikant Satpathy, a poultry farm owner of Panasa village in Odisha's Jajpur district.

Dozens of poultry farmers in the adjoining areas have lost their investments. Akshya Rout, a guest worker of Dharmaasala in Jajpur district had returned from Surat city in Gujarat in April this



The Naraj bridge over Mahanadi river on the outskirts of Cuttack city, which is normally less crowded in comparison to other bridges in the city, was on Monday clogged with people and vehicles. Unusually, a big gathering of visitors flocked to the bridge to witness the large volume

of water crossing under the bridge. It is worth mentioning following incessant rain on the upstream of Mahanadi and in different parts of Odisha, the Hirakud Dam authorities have been releasing excess flood water for the past four days causing the river to swell.

try unit. While many birds were washed away, the others met their watery grave," said Rajanikant Satpathy, a poultry farm owner of Panasa village in Odisha's Jajpur district.

Dozens of poultry farmers in the adjoining areas have lost their investments.

Akshya Rout, a guest worker of Dharmaasala in Jajpur district had returned from Surat city in Gujarat in April this

year after the nationwide lockdown was announced. He had undertaken brinjal and other vegetable cultivation in his two hectares of land after borrowing some money from the bank. "I had grown various kinds of vegetables in two acres of land on the bank of Brahmani river. The swirling water of Brahmani has devoured them all. Even there is no trace of the roots of the vegetable plants," said Rout.

MP man hoists Pak flag at home, held

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY
BHOPAL, AUG. 31

A man in a Madhya Pradesh village was arrested for hoisting the national flag of Pakistan at his house, police said on Monday.

Faruq Khan (44), a resident of Shipra village in Dewas district, was arrested on Sunday night under section 153A (Promoting enmity between groups on ground of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language and disturbing harmony) following a complaint filed by a local revenue officer in this regard.

A video clip showing the Pakistan flag fluttering at his house has gone viral in social media, prompting local tehsildar to order the revenue inspector of the area Lakhani Singh to make an on-the-spot enquiry into the incident.

Mr Singh recorded Khan's statement and then lodged a complaint with the local police, leading to the latter's arrest, industrial area police station in-charge R K Sharma said.

"Faruq Khan said his minor son had hoisted the flag without knowing that it was the national flag of Pakistan. He said his minor son destroyed it by burning after knowing about it", Mr Singh said.

"A police team reached the village to probe the matter. Khan repeated the statement given to Mr Singh", Mr Sharma said.

Investigating officer Jitendra Yadav said Khan has not destroyed the flag as he claimed before police since the flag has been seized by police.

"We are probing where the Khan family found the Pakistan flag," Mr Yadav said.

final-year exams. However, a state has to approach UGC if it cannot conduct exams by September 30, the apex court had said. The modalities of the exams, online or offline following COVID-19 protocols, would be decided by the university concerned in consultation with stakeholders, the official said. The meeting also decided that final semester results for arts and science streams of Jadavpur University, and Presidency University, which had already been announced on the criteria of 80:20 assessment, will not be valid and the two universities would have to conduct the exams as well, he said. — *PTI*

Modi govt has destroyed informal sector: Rahul

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG. 31

Accusing the Modi government of destroying the informal sector, former Congress President Rahul Gandhi on Monday urged the entire country to unite and fight against this decision.

Mr Gandhi said that the government wants to break this sector. "The BJP government has attacked the informal structure. There is an attempt to turn you into a slave".

Citing demonetisation, wrong version of GST and the Covid19 lockdown as three examples of the government's attempt to destroy the informal sector, he said: "The BJP government has been attacking the informal sector over the past six years. I am giving you three massive examples right now- Demonetisation, wrong GST and Lockdown".

"Don't think the lockdown was unplanned. Don't think it was done at the last minute. The aim of these three decisions was to destroy our informal sector," he claimed in a new video series on the economy.

Mr Gandhi charged that the informal sector, which comprises the poor, farmers and small traders, has a lot of money which the government cannot touch and they now want to break this sector and extort this money from them.

"The effects of this attack on the informal sector will be seen soon," he said.

Punjab revises fee in govt hospitals, Opp. slams move

Chandigarh, Aug. 31: The Punjab government has revised fees for several medical services in the government hospitals in the state with effect from September 1, drawing sharp reaction from the Opposition.

Among services, the charge for ambulance has been raised from 5 per km to 15 per km while the fee for ECG has been increased from ₹60 to ₹75.

Similarly, the OPD registration charge has been increased from ₹5 to ₹10 and the admission charges for general ward has been hiked from ₹25 to ₹40.

The operation charges for minor surgery have been revised upward to ₹250 from ₹100 earlier and for major surgery, the fee has been increased from ₹750 to ₹1,200, as per the order.

The fee for private AC room has been increased from ₹500 to ₹1,000 per day and bed charges in general ward has been increased from ₹30 to ₹40. However, the state health officials said these charges are meant for the maintenance of hospitals. — *PTI*

THE ASIAN AGE

1 SEPTEMBER 2020

As Covid-19 cases spike, go slower on ‘unlocking’

As the Centre and states open up more sectors and allow the resumption of further activities from Tuesday, September 1, as India begins the “Unlock 4.0” phase, it is important not to forget how the pandemic is spiralling across the country, with daily coronavirus cases crossing 80,000 Sunday, the highest anywhere in the world. The last week of August witnessed a huge spurt in cases, and not just in Maharashtra and some southern states but also Delhi, that earlier seemed to have the numbers under control. And while there has also been a considerable increase in the number of tests per day, which is likely to rise, there is no hard evidence to say the rise in infections detected is primarily due to the increased testing – as health officials and the government fondly hope.

We need to find a balance – and move a little slower.

One really wonders how the Centre and state governments are confident that this is the right moment to open more activities. Schools/colleges will remain shut till September 30, but the authorities have decided to go ahead with the JEE and NEET exams for medical and engineering admissions, which will expose thousands of students across the country to the risk of contracting the virus. Also, teachers and some students from Classes 9 to 12 might be called to schools for “guidance” from later in September, the first time most will come into physical contact with each other since March – which again appears to be an avoidable step.

Most important, the government’s decision to allow the resumption of Metro rail services – even if in a staggered manner – appears premature. To allow public transport buses (with 20 people allowed and with seats spaced out; or taxis or autos, with two/three passengers) is one thing, but the Metro trains carry thousands of passengers travelling in close proximity, not to mention the thousands who will collect at Metro stations even if the capacity on the trains is restricted. All this creates a situation which might facilitate the spread of the virus. A serious rethink needs to be done prior to September 7, when Metro services are set to resume, and it should be permitted only in those areas where the Covid-19 pandemic is completely under control. That, unfortunately, is not yet the case in any of India’s major metropolises.

From September 21, social, religious, political, academic and sports functions can be held with up to 100 people, and weddings and funerals (now allowed with lesser numbers) will be permitted with 100 people. This, in our view, is also premature, and should wait till things stabilise further. The festival season is fast approaching, and it is vital to set strict norms now to ensure that low-key celebrations are held which will not endanger people’s lives. There is, of course, the counter-argument: that we must “learn to live with Covid” till a vaccine is found and distributed, which might take up to a year, and that people cannot put off economic and other activities indefinitely. The lockdown that India imposed in March was one of the world’s harshest – which severely hurt a lot of people and its benefits remain debatable. But now we might be swinging to the other extreme – rapidly opening up activities without considering all the consequences. We need to find a balance – and move a little slower.

Trouble for NRC ‘rejects’

The stalemate in the process of preparing the Supreme Court-mandated National Register of Citizens in Assam has put the lives of 19 lakh-odd people who were excluded from it in serious trouble. The process mandates that each excluded person should be issued a rejection slip which can be challenged in the Foreigners Tribunal, which is empowered to declare a person non-citizen. The failure to issue the slips has stalled the entire process. As a result, those affected face difficulties in matters of their normal life such as finding a job, getting married, going on a foreign tour and contesting polls. The government blames it on Covid-19, which made most government departments other than those involved in the containment of the pandemic non-functional for months on end.

The very process of preparing the NRC was riddled with serious issues. It was at first perceived as an attempt to exclude Muslims who had migrated to Assam from other parts of the country. Serious discrepancies such as members of the same family getting different status were reported as soon as the list was published. The BJP, which had all along called it a tool to ‘eliminate infiltrators’, changed its stand after discovering that a third of those excluded were Hindus. The party’s Assam unit called for the verification of the list but it looks next to impossible after reports said the basic data of the NRC has been lost.

Citizenship is the primary identity of a person, and its denial, rightly or wrongly, compromises the very right to life. No government has the right to keep a decision on it pending for long. The government must admit that it had not thought through the process and hence the present mess. It must either cancel the entire exercise or fast-track it. This is not an issue for which it can blame an act of God.

THE ASIAN AGE

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Aakar Patel

‘Unlock’ rules are illogical: If flights allowed, why not trains?

From Tuesday, September 1, we will have Unlock 4.0. I have lost track of what this means and I do not think anybody really understands it. What the Indian government has done is try and manage the spread of Covid-19 by keeping things shut. If India forces people to stay away from one another by denying them access to services, it will stop or slow the spread of the infection.

This has produced rules that, as I said, I do not really understand. For instance, the airlines have been operating since May, and have been flying for more than three months now. Flights are allowed to be flown at full capacity, with the middle seat occupied. However, the Indian Railways is still by and large largely shut, and has been shut since the lockdown began. From running 17,000 trains daily, it today runs only 230 special ones. What is the logic of not having trains run when planes are allowed to run full? Air passengers cannot maintain the six-foot separation on their seats so it seems illogical to allow people to fly but not travel by train.

The benefit to the stopping the spread of Covid-19 is uncertain but

Schools and colleges will remain shut but exams will continue to be held. If we are asking all schools and colleges to do online classes, why are we then asking students to gather in masses to take their exams?

the damage to the economy is visible. Reports from Surat last month said that the production of textiles was less than 25 per cent of normal and the big reason was the lack of labour.

More than 30 lakh people had left Surat and its surrounding industrial zones in April and May, according to a report in the Hindu Frontline magazine published on July 31. There is almost no way for these people to return to their jobs even if they wanted to now come back. There are reports that mill owners and other businesses have begun flying labourers back. But why not just open the Railways? This has not been explained to us.

Delhi’s Metro will reportedly open this week with 50 per cent capacity

(again note the difference with airlines), while Mumbai’s local trains, the city’s lifeline and its artery, have stayed shut. I saw a very moving note from journalists to the chief minister asking that those who were not accredited with the government to be allowed to use the trains because it was too expensive for them to take taxis everywhere.

Schools and colleges will remain shut but exams will continue to be held. Again, this makes no sense to me. If we are asking all schools and colleges to do online classes, why are we then asking students to gather in masses to take their exams?

We are told that cinema halls will have to stay shut as it won’t be feasible to run shows with only 25 per cent capacity due to physical distancing norms. But a movie is about as long as a flight and the seats are equidistant in both. What is the thinking behind the decision to disallow movie halls, a very large sector of the entertainment industry and its employment, from opening?

It all seems slightly eccentric to me, and I suspect that some of this is touched with the moralism that we see in the Prime Minister. For

instance, restaurants were allowed to open but not bars. Why? There is no standard format in a restaurant’s seating, as we know. And the same is true for bars. The only reason seems to be that the government in some way looks down on those who drink. In Unlock 4.0 bars, will be allowed to serve liquor over the counter but not inside. Meaning the bar will be turned into a liquor store and the employment that its waiters and cooks and other staff would have otherwise got is not available even today, in September, more than five full months after the lockdown began.

Some of the confusion has then come from the Centre versus State differences. Apparently, the opening of gyms is allowed by the Centre but many of the states are not letting them do so.

In other nations, the lockdowns have been mostly voluntary. In India, it has been like a curfew. Even today, the Mumbai police can confiscate your vehicle if you cannot show a “good reason” for being out. What is a “good reason” is left for the police to determine of course.

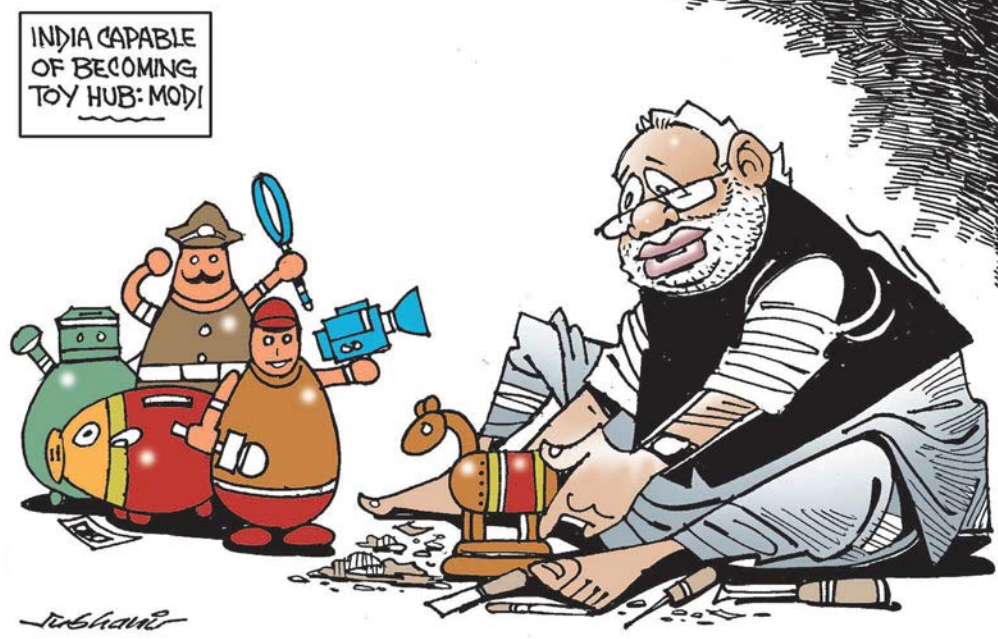
We have one nation one tax, but we

do not have the free movement of people. Those going from one state to another state must fill out some application and ask for permission which may or may not be given.

As I said at the beginning, India has tried to slow or stop the spread of Covid-19 through denial of services. Has it worked? I don’t think so. India is the only large nation along with Argentina whose numbers have continuously and without a break risen from March. The only way of stopping the spread of Covid-19 is good individual behaviour at the mass level. But we have Union ministers in meetings wearing their masks on their chin instead of covering their mouth and nose. How can such people communicate good behaviour to the public? They simply cannot. And so we have the endless tweaking of rules, all leading to failure as is visible in the numbers, with bureaucrats being kept busy making funny and illogical rules for 1.0 and 2.0 and 3.0 and now 4.0.

Aakar Patel is a senior journalist and columnist

Subhani



Is another global eco crisis now inevitable?



Mohan Guruswamy

Speaking at the London Business School recently, former Reserve Bank governor Raghuram Rajan warned that the global economy was “slowly slipping” into the Great Depression-like problems of the 1930s and that central banks must sit together and define the new “rules of the game” to find better solutions. Dr Rajan, who was earlier IMF’s chief economist, was one of the few to have predicted the 2007-08 financial crisis.

The essential problem we must confront is how to rectify a world economic system that has gone hopelessly wrong and resembles nothing like what was envisaged in early 1940s. To understand the situation we are in, imagine living on an island as a part of a small group, in which people are assigned specific vocations and tasks. In this system one person makes clothes, another shoes, someone pots and pans, someone grows food and someone else prints money to facilitate the exchange of goods and services. The shoe-maker exchanges his goods with another for money which he uses to pay for food or whatever. Since everybody in this system can produce as much as possible, the person who prints the money will be best off among all as he can buy whatever he wants and pay for it with his own money. Take this one step further. Producers who hold more paper than they need then start leaving it with the person who prints them to hold.

In 2019, world GDP was about \$88 trillion, and the per capita GDP was \$11,400. In the past 10 years, world GDP growth declined from 3.13 per cent to 2.47 per cent. In 1960, WGDGP was \$11.35 trillion (constant 2010). It was just \$1.1 trillion in 1900 and took 50 years to

grow fourfold to \$4.01 trillion. The big leaps began after 1971 when US President Richard Nixon unilaterally delinked the US dollar from the international gold standard. In 2000, it scaled \$51 trillion.

The total world merchandise trade in 2019 was \$19.5 trillion, with China (without Hong Kong) the biggest player, accounting for \$5.31 trillion, with a trade surplus of \$422 billion. The top five global traders account for 50.6 per cent of world trade. The EU’s share is \$4.49 trillion and the United States’ is \$3.91 trillion, also accounting for about a quarter of world trade. The most preferred global currency is the US dollar. Total world reserves in 2019-Q2 was \$11.8 trillion, of which 61.8 per cent was held in US dollars, 20.5 per cent in euros, 5.7 per cent in yen and 1.8 per cent in Renminbi.

Almost all these reserves are held by individual countries in the form of bonds, mostly earning very small or even zero interest rates. This is like money deposited in a bank, but it’s really money lent to the issuing country. As the reserves are mostly in US dollars and euros, the issuing countries have little reason to hold much of them as reserves. The total US reserves are about \$132 billion. Contrast this to India’s \$535 billion (including \$35 billion in gold) and China’s \$3,300 billion.

In 1995, advanced economies held around 67 per cent of total foreign exchange reserves, with 82 per cent of these being allocated reserves. By 2011, the picture had been flipped on its head: emerging and developing countries held 67 per cent of total reserves.

The purpose of sharing these three world economy snapshots is to offer a

The international system was unilaterally abrogated in 1971 when US President Nixon delinked the dollar from the gold standard.

general backdrop on how we have come to this pass. A situation where the rest of the world invests in the US, so that it can splurge on itself. When it’s short, it can just print more dollars, which the rest of us lap up quite happily. Every time the US goes into convulsions due to its innate profligacy and economic mismanagement, the world economies go into a tailspin as the US is the world’s biggest importer and it’s where the world keeps its money. Now let’s turn to how the system actually works.

Countries like China and India produce goods and services at low cost for consumption in the US, which in turn pays them in dollars, that they deposit in American banks. Since money can’t sit still, this money in then lent to Americans, who today have the highest per capita indebtedness in the world, to splurge on houses, cars, flatscreen TVs and computers, that mostly they can often ill-afford. In effect, the rest of the world is plying the US with cheap credit, encouraging it to splurge even more. But there is no global regulator to caution the US on its profligacy or force it to mend its ways.

At the July 1944 Bretton Woods Conference, in the last phase of World War II, Lord Keynes had in mind an elaborate scheme that called for the

establishment of an international reserve currency called “bancor”, administered by a global central bank. But this had to be shelved in the face of American obduracy. This central bank would be vested with the possibility of creating money and with the authority to take action to ensure balanced trade. As outlined by Keynes, countries with payment surpluses should increase imports from the deficit countries, thereby ensuring foreign trade equilibrium.

But the United States, as a likely net exporter and creditor nation, and eager to take on the role of the world’s economic powerhouse, thwarted the Keynes plan. The American delegates seemed more concerned about inflationary pressures in the post-war economy. Its delegate, Harry Dexter White, argued that an imbalance was a problem only of the deficit country. White’s determined obduracy is now under a cloud after he was unmasked as a Soviet spy. Did he scuttle “bancor” at Moscow’s insistence to ensure the crisis we now are living through?

The international system was unilaterally abrogated in 1971 when US President Nixon delinked the dollar from the gold standard. In the absence of a standard and a useful regulatory function for the IMF, the great private banks were given a licence to run amok. We now reap the bitter harvest. With the US dollar as the world’s preferred currency, the US and its profligate citizens have an apparently endless access to easy credit to satiate their sundry appetites. Ironically, the ever-rising annual US trade deficit is the de facto engine of growth for many economies, like China, the Asean countries and even India.

The writer, a policy analyst studying economic and security issues, held senior positions in government and industry. He also specialises in the Chinese economy.

LETTERS FREE SPEECH

Right to the freedom of expression and the right of the State to secure its citizens have suffered or thrived on how they are interpreted.

Free speech, meaning free argument, is at the heart of a self-governing society and cannot be a partisan issue. Dissent being a product of application of sane human intellect to an issue at hand, but the govt would brand intellectualism per se as anti-national. There is a price to pay for sponsoring and pursuing freedom of speech. Sadly, few are prepared to pay for what is the very sap that nurtures nations and men. We just find newer ways to sustain the lid on free speech through pedantic obfuscation.

R. Narayanan
Navi Mumbai

HELP IN ACCIDENTS

THE GOVERNMENT is planning to provide free treatment to people who get injured in road accidents. Under this scheme, the government will bear the expenses up to ₹2.5 lakh per person in case of accident. Preparations are being made to link this free treatment scheme with toll tax so a victim can be helped as soon as reported. According to sources in the Ministry of Road and Transport, Cashless treatment will be done under this scheme for people who have been hit and run or injured due to being hit by vehicles without third party insurance. This scheme truly deserves praises and I really appreciate the government for considering this issue.

Jhalak Dutta
Ujjain

WILFUL DEFAULT

IDBI BANK has declared Industrialist A.C. Muthiah as a wilful defaulter after First Leading Co. of India Ltd. failed to repay the due of ₹508.40 crores to the Bank. Already there are people like Mallaya, Nirav Modi, Lalit Modi, etc., who have escaped the clutches of our law and are hiding in foreign countries. It is high time the Finance Ministry takes serious note of such cases and take immediate recovery action,

N. Mahadevan
Chennai

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

IN BRIEF

Nod to Amazon drone delivery

San Francisco: Amazon on Monday said a freshly-issued Federal Aviation Administration certificate has cleared the launch pad for drone deliveries in the US. "This certification is an important step forward for Prime Air and indicates the FAA's confidence in Amazon's operating and safety procedures for an autonomous drone delivery service that will one day deliver packages to our customers," Amazon VP David Carbon said. "We will continue to develop and refine our technology to fully integrate delivery drones into the airspace," he said. — *AFP*

Chinese-born Oz journalist held

Sydney: A Chinese-born Australian journalist for CCTV-News, the English-language channel of China Central Television, has been detained in China, Australia's government said Monday. Australian officials had a consular visit with Cheng Lei at a detention facility via video link on Thursday, foreign minister Marise Payne said in a statement. They will continue to provide assistance and support to her and her family, Australia had been informed by Chinese authorities of her detention, but made its first public announcement on Monday. — *Agencies*

2 detained over Ryanair security

London: British counter-terrorism police were holding two men on Monday following a "security threat" aboard a Ryanair flight that led to fighter jets being scrambled to intercept it. Police said they a 34-year-old man from Kuwait and a 48-year-old man from Italy under terrorism laws late on Sunday at Stansted Airport after the flight from Vienna landed. Britain's Royal Air Force said it had launched two Typhoon fighter jets from a base in nearby Lincolnshire "to intercept a civilian aircraft". "The aircraft was escorted safely to Stansted," it added. — *AP*

2 die in UAE restaurant blast

Abu Dhabi: A powerful blast ripped through a restaurant in the UAE's capital here on Monday, killing two persons, police said. A number of people were injured in the explosion which took place at the fast food restaurant in a building on Rashid Bin Saeed Street, according to a newspaper report. According to on-site investigations, the incident was caused by a misalignment in the gas container fittings following refuelling, the Abu Dhabi Media Office said. Emergency response teams evacuated residents of the building and cordoned off the area. — *PTI*

SUDAN, REBELS STRIKE DEAL TO END ROW

Juba, Aug. 31: Sudanese leaders and rebel commanders agreed Monday on a historic peace deal, a crucial step towards ending 17 years of conflict in which hundreds of thousands of people were killed.

Leaders of the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF), an umbrella organisation of rebel groups from the western region of Darfur and the southern states of South Kordofan and Blue Nile, raised their fists in celebration after inking the agreement.

Fighting in Darfur alone left around three lakh people dead after rebels took up arms there in 2003, according to the United Nations, with former government leaders accused of carrying out genocide and of crimes against humanity.

Conflict in South Kordofan and Blue Nile erupted in 2011, in the wake of South Sudan's independence, resuming two decades of war. "I congratulate all in Sudan on reaching a historic comprehensive peace that addressed the roots of the problem and ended the war, God willing," said Gibril Ibrahim, commander of one of rebel groups, the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM).

He paid tribute to all those killed or affected by the long years of war.

Sudanese paramilitary commander Mohamed Hamdan Daglo — best known by his nickname "Hemeti", and who commanded fighters in the war — signed the deal on behalf of Khartoum. — *AFP*

Israeli flight in UAE

US National Security Adviser Robert O'Brien speaks next to US Presidential Adviser Jared Kushner (centre) and Head of Israel's National Security Council Meir Ben-Shabbat (left) in front of an airplane of El Al at the tarmac of Abu Dhabi airport, following the arrival of the first-ever commercial flight from Israel to the UAE, on Monday. The US-Israeli delegation took off on a historic first direct commercial flight from Tel Aviv to Abu Dhabi to mark the normalisation of ties between the Jewish state and the UAE. — *AFP*

Trump seizes on protests, Dems slam him for tension

Aides want Don to give aggressive message on law, order

Washington, Aug. 31: Democrats accused President Donald Trump of trying to inflame racial tensions and incite violence to benefit his campaign after he praised supporters who clashed with protesters during a deadly night in Portland, Oregon, and announced he will travel to Kenosha, Wisconsin, amid anger over the shooting of another Black man by police.

Trump unleashed a flurry of tweets and retweets the day after a man identified as a supporter of a right-wing group was shot and killed in Portland. The city has been the site of months of daily protests, and a large caravan of Trump supporters and Black Lives Matter protesters clashed Saturday night. Trump praised the caravan participants as 'GREAT PATRIOTS' and retweeted what appeared to be the dead man's name along with a message to 'Rest in peace'.

Trump also retweeted those who blamed the city's Democratic mayor for the death.

"The people of Portland, like all other cities & parts of our great Country, want Law & Order," Trump wrote Sunday. "The Radical Left Democrat Mayors, like the dummy running Portland, or the guy right now in his basement unwilling to lead or even speak out against crime, will never be able to do it!"

Trump has throughout

State cops in Portland to probe clashes death

Portland, Aug. 31: State Police will return to Portland to help local authorities after the fatal shooting of a man following clashes between President Donald Trump supporters and counter-protesters that led to an argument between the president and the mayor over who was to blame for the violence.

Protesters were back on the streets for a demonstration Sunday night out-

side a public safety building. Police declared an unlawful assembly and arrested 29 people. Two of those arrested had handguns and others had knives and at least one had an expandable baton, police said.

Many wore helmets, gas masks, goggles and external armour. Police said some carried shields and reflective squares used to reflect police lights back toward officers. — *AP*

4 hurt in shooting at Kansas City club

Kansas City, Aug. 31: Four people were shot and injured Sunday at a night club in Kansas City, Missouri, where a mass shooting occurred in January, police said.

Kansas City Police spokesman Sgt Jake Becchina said the latest shooting at the 9ine Ultra Lounge was reported around 2.30 a.m. Sunday.

The summer cast American cities as under siege by violence and lawlessness, despite the fact that most of the demonstrations against racial injustice have been largely peaceful. With about

Investigators said the shooting was related to an argument that started inside the club and then moved outside where several people fired shots.

One victim found at the scene with several gunshot wounds was taken to a hospital. Three others arrived separately at hospitals. All four victims remained stable. — *AP*

nine weeks until Election Day, some of his advisers see an aggressive "law and order" message as the best way for the President to turn voters against his Democratic rival, Joe Biden. — *AP*

Lebanon's PM-designate vows reforms

Beirut, Aug. 31: Lebanese Prime Minister-designate Mustapha Adib vowed Monday to swiftly launch a reformist government and seek international financial assistance after the Beirut blast deepened a political and economic crisis.

In a televised speech after his nomination, Lebanon's former ambassador to Germany said there is "a need to form a government in record time and to begin implementing reforms immediately, starting with an agreement with the International Monetary Fund".

Adib faces the nearly impossible challenge of embodying change after being picked by the political establishment. Adib's name only emerged on Sunday to replace Hassan Diab,

whose government resigned in the aftermath of the deadly August 4 blast at Beirut port.

The 48-year-old was born in the northern city of Tripoli and is a Sunni Muslim, making him eligible to become Prime Minister under Lebanon's sectarian-based power-sharing system.

His biography on the Berlin embassy website presents him as an aca-

demic who holds a PhD in political science. It says he has conducted "research and expert work in the areas of both human and state security, parliamentary oversight of the security sector, decentralisation and local democracy, and electoral laws".

From 2000 to 2004, he served as an adviser to Najib Mikati, a billionaire and former prime minister. — *AFP*

CORONAVIRUS CASES IN U.S. NEAR 6 MILLION

New York, Aug. 31: The United States neared six million Coronavirus cases on Sunday, nearly a quarter of the planet's total, as nations around the world battle to contain the raging pandemic.

Global Coronavirus infections soared past 25 million, as countries tightened restrictions to halt the health crisis that has upended life for most of humanity.

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

The United States, had recorded 5.99 million cases of infection as of 0030 GMT Monday, according to Johns Hopkins University's tracker. The death toll is just over 183,000. The US hit five million cases three weeks ago, just 17 days after reaching four million, the tracker said.

The virus has hobbled the US economy and cast a shadow over President Donald Trump's once-promising re-election prospects. — *AP*

Merkel condemns 'shameful' virus stir**38,000 had gathered in Berlin on Saturday to protest restrictions to curb Coronavirus**

Berlin, Aug. 31: German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Monday condemned as "shameful" an attempt by protesters angry at Coronavirus restrictions to storm Parliament, saying they had abused the right to demonstrate peacefully.

Several hundred people tried to get into the Reichstag building during a rally against Coronavirus rules in Berlin on Saturday.

"This right to demonstrate peacefully is of course a very valuable asset even during a pandemic," Merkel's spokesman Steffen Seibert said at a government press conference in Berlin.

However, he said their actions were "a clear abuse".

"The result was disgraceful images at the Reichstag which are unacceptable, anti-democrats trying to make themselves heard on the steps of our democratic Parliament," he said.

Police estimated 38,000 people, double the number expected, gathered in Berlin on Saturday to protest at restrictions imposed to curb the spread of the Coronavirus, such as wearing masks and social distancing. Several hundred broke through barriers and a police cordon to climb the steps leading to the entrance to the Reichstag. They were narrowly prevented from

Germany tells Russia to probe poisoning

Paris, Aug. 31: Germany on Monday urged Moscow to step up its efforts to investigate the apparent poisoning of opposition leader Alexei Navalny who is currently being treated at a Berlin hospital in a coma.

Foreign minister Heiko Maas said in an address to French ambassadors that Europe needed "constructive" relations with Russia for the sake of the continent's own security but it was clear now that "dark clouds" were hanging over bilateral ties.

"Of course we have the expectation that Russia should contribute more to clearing up of the Navalny case than it is doing at the moment," he said alongside French counterpart Jean-Yves Le Drian. Berlin's Charite hospital said on Friday there was "some improvement" in Navalny's condition, but the 44-year-old remains in a medically induced coma and on a ventilator. Navalny fell ill after boarding a plane in Siberia earlier this month. — *AFP*

entering the building by police, who used pepper spray and arrested several people.

Merkel praised as "quick-witted and brave" three police officers who were seen pushing back crowds from the entrance to the Reichstag alone until reinforcements arrived. President Frank-Walter Steinmeier on Monday invited the officers to Berlin's Bellevue Palace to thank them for their work. He described the protesters' actions as "despicable", adding: "We will not tolerate any anti-democratic smear campaign or disparagement of the Federal Republic of Germany at the

Bundestag." About 300 people were arrested in scuffles with police, in front of the Reichstag but also outside the Russian embassy, where protesters pelted police with bottles.

Resistance to Coronavirus restrictions in Germany has gathered pace in recent weeks with demos attracting a diverse crowd of conspiracy theorists, anti-vaxxers and far-right or far-left activists.

Health minister Jens Spahn was spat on at the weekend as he tried to talk to protesters in Bergisch Gladbach. Seibert condemned the incident, saying it was "certainly not democratic dialogue". — *AFP*

China carries out forced medication on Uighurs

Beijing, Aug. 31: The government in China's far northwest Xinjiang region is resorting to draconian measures to combat the Coronavirus, including spraying detainees with acidic disinfectant, physically locking residents in homes, imposing strict quarantines of more than 40 days and arresting those who do not comply.

Furthermore, in what experts call a breach of medical ethics, some residents are being coerced into swallowing tradition-

al Chinese medicine despite a lack of rigorous clinical data proving it works, according to government notices, social media posts, and interviews with three people in quarantine in Xinjiang.

One middle-aged Uighur woman said that when she was detained at the height of China's Coronavirus outbreak, she was forced to drink a medicine that made her feel weak and nauseous. She and others in her cell had to strip naked once a week as guards hosed them and

their cells down with disinfectant, she said.

"It was scalding," recounted the woman by phone from Xinjiang, declining to be named out of fear of retribution. "My hands were ruined, my skin was peeling."

The latest gruelling lockdown, now in its 45th day, comes in response to 826 cases reported in Xinjiang since mid-July. China's largest caseload since the initial outbreak.

The lockdown is especially striking because of its severity. — *AP*

Strike chief held in Belarus crackdown

Minsk, Aug. 31: Belarus' authorities on Monday detained the organiser of a strike at a top industrial plant, part of a methodical effort to stifle weeks of protests demanding the resignation of the country's authoritarian leader of 26 years after an election the opposition denounced as being rigged.

President Alexander Lukashenko has dismissed the protesters as Western puppets and rejected the European Union's offers of mediation. After a ferocious crackdown on demonstrators in the first days after the August 9 vote that caused international outrage, his government has

avoided large-scale violence against demonstrators and sought to end the protests with threats and the selective jailing of activists.

Anatoly Bokun, who leads the strike committee at Belaruskali, a huge potash factory in Soligorsk, was detained by police and is facing a 15-day jail sentence on charges of organising an unsanctioned protest. The factory, which accounts for a fifth of the world's potash fertiliser output, is the nation's top cash earner. Strike committee spokesman Gleb Sandras said authorities had managed to halt a strike that began two weeks ago. — *AP*

200 PAKISTANIS STRANDED IN INDIA TO RETURN

SHAFQAT ALI ISLAMABAD, AUG. 31

At least 200 people stranded in India due to the Coronavirus lockdown will return to Pakistan on September 3, officials said Sunday.

Pakistan had sealed its border with India in March after a surge in number of Coronavirus infections. The people who had gone to India got stuck there as a result of the lockdown.

Pakistanis, stranded in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Delhi and Rajasthan, will return via Wagha border. The border between the two countries will be especially opened for them.

According to a source in the foreign office, their return was made possible because of the efforts of the Pakistani High Commission in India.

SHARIF AT RISK IF EXPOSED TO COVID: REPORT

DC CORRESPONDENT ISLAMABAD, AUG. 31

Fresh medical reports of former PM Nawaz Sharif were submitted in Lahore High Court showed that he may be "at much greater risk than a normal person" if exposed to Covid-19.

Sharif, given his age and significant disease burden, falls in the category of patients who, if exposed to the virus.

INDIA | ABROAD

Indian-origin leader underlines need to focus on foreigners' living conditions**Pritam Singh is Singapore's first Leader of Oppn**

Singapore, Aug. 31: Pritam Singh, Singapore's Indian-origin politician scripted history on Monday when the city-state's Parliament conferred the duties and privileges to him as the country's first Leader of the Opposition.

Singh's Workers' Party won 10 parliamentary seats out of the 93 it contested in the July 10 General Election, making it the biggest opposition presence in Singapore's parliamentary history.

As the House began proceedings on Monday, one of the first orders of business was a ministerial state-

ment by the Leader of the House Indranee Rajah on formally recognising Singh, 43, as the country's first Opposition leader.

Addressing Parliament, Singh underlined the need to focus on foreigners and their living conditions. He said how foreign workers are managed and accommodated needs to be improved.

Their (foreigners) presence gives Singapore a vitality that keeps us economically relevant and also provides jobs and opportunities to our fellow Singaporeans. Many of us count the foreigners in our

midst — regardless of race, language or religion — as our friends, Channel News Asia quoted Singh as saying.

It is precisely because we need foreigners to help power our economy that we need to pay more attention to the Singapore worker... some of whom feel excluded from (the) opportunities created in their homeland, Singh said.

The House passed a motion to double Singh's speaking time from 20 minutes — which is allotted to backbenchers — to 40 minutes, the duration

allotted to office holders.

Singh took the seat directly opposite Prime Minister Lee in the chamber. This is similar to the practice in other countries that formally recognise the role of the Leader of the Opposition, Indranee pointed out. Singh called on the Ministry of Manpower to publish the names of "recalcitrant" employers who do not give locals a fair chance in hiring and promotion. The MOM had recently placed 47 companies on the Fair Consideration Framework (FCF) watchlist. — *AP*

UK Sikh soldier gets promoted, goes viral

London, Aug. 31: A British Sikh soldier's promotion within the UK Army ranks has become a social media sensation after the news posted by his proud wife attracted thousands of messages and comments.

Corporal Chamandeep Singh, a Punjab-born soldier in the Royal Logistic Corps (RLC) of the British Army, attended a military

school in India for 12 years.

During this period, he read about another Indian soldier, Havildar Major Rajinder Singh Dhatt, and his heroic involvement in the Burma campaign of World War II. The story of this Sikh war veteran, along with Singh's own father having served in the Indian Army, inspired him to move to the UK. — *AP*

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	38,628.29	-2.13
Nifty 50	11,387.50	-2.23
S&P 500*	3,505.94	-0.06
Dollar (₹)	73.60	-0.27
Pound Sterling (₹)	97.93	0.50
Euro (₹)	87.50	0.10
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	52,638.161	0.30
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	45.84	0.03
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.078	-0.019
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.723	-0.006

* As of 9:30 PM IST

Trai gives Voda Idea time till Sept. 4 to reply

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) has granted additional time till September 4 to Vodafone Idea to respond to its showcase notice on the firm's priority plan, a source said. Trai had slapped a showcase notice on Vodafone Idea over its pay-more-for-priority-treatment mobile plan, saying the tariff offer "lacks transparency", is "misleading" and not in compliance with regulatory framework.

Vedanta ties with SBI for ₹10,000 cr syndicated loan



Vedanta Ltd said it has tied up with State Bank of India for a long-term syndicated loan facility worth Rs 10,000 crore. A syndicated loan is offered by a group of lenders. SBI has given a commitment of Rs 5,000 crore as a lender, Hindustan Zinc, a subsidiary of Vedanta, said in a filing to the BSE. The facility end use stipulates refinancing of near-term debt maturities of Vedanta and for capital expenditure.

Cyient to acquire Oz consulting firm IG Partners

Cyient said it has agreed to acquire Australian consulting firm IG Partners, a move that will help the Indian IT firm expand its end-to-end offerings for the local and regional resources sector. The rationale for the acquisition is gaining access to decision makers with global mining majors, acceleration in Cyient's mining strategy and positioning Cyient as a digital transformation leader in the market, the company said.

SpiceJet arm invents portable ventilator

SpiceJet launched a portable non-invasive ventilator brand for patients with mild-to-moderate breathing issues. Engineers of SpiceJet Technic, a subsidiary, designed the 'SpiceOxy' device at its innovation lab, the airline said. Since this device is turbine-based and light weight, it can be used at home, in an ambulance, on hilly terrain like army base camps, hospitals, and portable applications like wheelchairs.

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■ Sebi's new margin rules sour sentiments

Border clash, GDP worries fell stocks

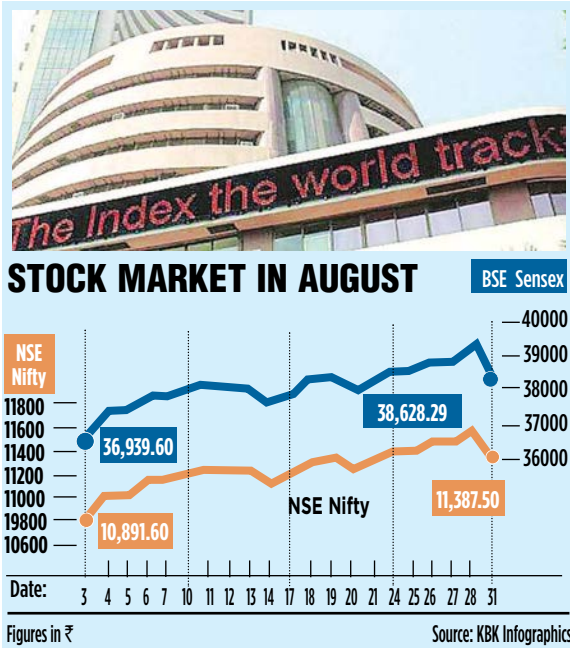
RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, AUG. 31

Market benchmark Sensex fell more than 1,600 points intra-day on fresh China military buildup and unconfirmed reports of clashes in the Ladakh region. This unexpected development together with fear of a likely sharp fall in the first quarter GDP growth, scheduled to be announced after market hours, led to profit-taking in the market.

The selling pressure may increase on Tuesday, with GDP contracting by -23.9 per cent in the June quarter. "Indian Army informed that Chinese troops violated the earlier agreement and carried out provocative military movements to change the status quo on the nights of August 29-30," reports said.

Sameet Chavan, chief analyst-technical and derivatives, Angel Broking, said, the sell-off was triggered mainly by the news of India-China clash once again taking place at the border. This resulted in a massive liquidation in the market by continued selling in the remaining part of the day.

New Sebi rule for margins in equity trading coming into effect from September 1 also played spoilsport in the second half of trading, as the market regulator has declined an extension being sought by the broking community. Sensex and Nifty-50 final-



ly closed more than 2 per cent down after strong early morning gains pushed the Sensex above the 40,000 mark. The Sensex closed 839 points down at 38,628.39, recovering partly from the day's low of 38,395.89 and the Nifty-50 closed at 11,387.50, down by 260 points. Investors lost more than Rs 4.55 lakh crore in a day as the broader market fell more, with the BSE Mid-cap Index down 3.79 per cent and the BSE Small-cap Index down 4.73 per cent. All sectoral indices closed down by 2 to 4.5 per cent except the IT index, which was down over half

a per cent. Sectoral heavy-weight banks and financials fell heavily with the BSE Bankex Index plunging 3.29 per cent and the Nifty Bank, by 3.14 per cent. Deepak Jasani, head of retail research, HDFC Securities, said, "The change in margin system and securities pledge-repledging could undoubtedly bring disruptions in volumes of daily trading, as there is insufficient preparation and validation by the participants in this system, viz. exchanges, depositories, depository participants, Clearing Corporation, brokers and clients."

NGO supports FPOs to create millet value chain in Odisha

New Delhi, Aug 31: NGO Rise Against Hunger India (Rahi) on Monday said it has launched a project to create an end-to-end value chain for millet farmers in Bargarh district, Odisha and is supporting five Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs).

Bengaluru-based Rahi is helping 800 farmers under these five FPOs to improve yield through agri-tools, equipment and other inputs, it said. This kind of rural projects will bring resilience in the rural farmers who are now left with no option but to migrate to the cities, it added.

"As part of its Covid-19 response, a few projects have been launched. One of the projects, focused on creating end to end value chain for millets, has been initiated in Bargarh, Odisha," the NGO said in a statement.

For the past few years, some farmers have shifted from paddy to finger-millet cultivation and it is now receiving wider acceptance in the area.

Rahi said FPOs have become a common vehicle to share resources and inputs and they also provide an assured market platform in the absence of which an individual farmer would be subject to the whims and fancies of private vendors.

Farmers are expecting 80-100 per cent growth in production and 100 per cent increase their income per acre of land. With an assured income, the farmers will have better resilience with less dependence on migrant income, it added.

In the past, Rahi programmes were carried out in Ri-Bhoi district of Meghalaya to create value chains for pineapple and banana farmers.

Currently, Rahi is working in four tribal villages of Bhil tribes in Dhar, Madhya Pradesh to create an end-to-end value chain for goat farmers. "Hunger and lack of income is the biggest enemy for the rural poor," Rahi executive director Dola Mohapatra said. —PTI

RBI announces measures to cool yields, boost liquidity

FALAKNAAZ SYED
MUMBAI, AUG. 31

Heading to banks' long-pending wish-list, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Monday allowed banks to park new government bonds acquisition made from September 1, 2020 upto March 31, 2021 under the 'held to maturity' (HTM) category up to an overall limit of 22 per cent of their deposits against the existing limit of 19.5 per cent, thereby allowing an additional purchase capacity of approximately Rs 3.6 lakh crore for banks without worrying about fluctuation risks over this period.

In addition, the RBI also announced a slew of measures to cool bond yields and maintain market stability at a time when more than 50 per cent of the Rs 20-lakh crore plus (Centre and states combined) borrowing programme will be coming up.

Among the other measures, the RBI also announced two more tranches of special open market bond operations, or 'Operation Twist,' and



additional term repo operations of Rs 1 lakh crore at a floating rate basis. The RBI also reiterated that it "remains committed to use all instruments at its command to revive the economy by maintaining congenial financial conditions, mitigate the impact of Covid-19 and restore the economy to a path of sustainable growth while preserving macroeconomic and financial stability."

The yields on government bonds have risen in the last one week on two concerns—the RBI MPC minutes released last week while did not say anything new, yet led to consternation on the future course of inflation.

SWEDEN MOVES CLOSER TO MAKING FOSSIL-FUEL-FREE STEEL

HANNA HOIKKALA & JESPER STARN
AUG. 31

A Swedish joint venture that hopes to rewrite the rules of steel production took a major step forward on Monday.

Hybrit, an initiative run by steelmaker SSAB AB, iron ore producer LKAB and energy supplier Vattenfall AB, aims to remove fossil fuels from the steelmaking value chain by replacing coking coal with hydrogen and clean energy.

The project is now starting test operations for the production of fossil-free sponge iron - something that SSAB's chief executive Martin Lindqvist sees as a "milestone" given the industry accounts for 7 per cent of carbon dioxide emissions globally and 10% in Sweden, he said.

The Hybrit project aims to reduce CO2 emissions to 25 kg per tonne of steel from about 1.6 tonnes by using hydrogen to produce direct reduced iron (DRI) as a feedstock, along with scrap, to make the metal. Electrolysing water from renewable energy sources will generate the hydrogen.

Product launch in a "big, commercial scale" is planned for the first quarter of 2026 and will target "the automotive industry and others," Lindqvist said in an interview. —Bloomberg

Norway fund drops Page Inds. over human rights breach risk

GWLADYS FOUCHE & TERJE SOLSVIK
OSLO, AUG. 31

Norway's \$1 trillion wealth fund said it had excluded Taiwan's Formosa Chemicals and Fibre, Formosa Taffeta and India's Page Industries from its portfolio, saying they posed an "unacceptable risk for violation of human rights".

The world's largest sovereign wealth fund sells holdings before announcing such exclusions to avoid excessive market moves.

Formosa Chemicals and Fibre declined to comment. An official reached by telephone at Formosa Taffeta said the company was closed for the day. Page Industries was not immediately reachable for comment.

In recent years, the fund, which operates under guidelines established by the Norwegian parliament, has focused on working conditions in textile factories in Asia, excluding companies it



thinks pose an ethical risk to its investments.

Set up in 1996 to preserve Norway's oil revenues for future generations, the fund holds around 1.5 per cent of globally listed shares and its decisions are often followed by other investors.

At the end of 2019, NBIM held a 0.84 per cent stake in Formosa Chemicals & Fibre, valued at \$144 million, and a 0.64 per cent stake in Formosa Taffeta valued at \$12.2 million.

The stake in Page Industries at that time stood at 0.42 per cent, with a market value of \$15.4 million.

The fund said in the statement that its management will also scrutinise oil firm PetroChina's work, engaging in active ownership in the hope of boosting the company's anti-corruption practices.

PetroChina had been under observation for possible exclusion since 2017 and had not responded to inquiries from the fund's ethics watchdog, the Council on Ethics, Norges Bank said.

The board of the Norwegian central bank, which manages the fund, concluded "active ownership" was therefore appropriate. —Reuters

Singapore's Atlantis launches digital bank

New Delhi, Aug 31: Singapore-based fintech company Atlantis on Monday said it has entered the Indian market with the launch of its digital bank, Neo-Bank.

Eyeing the \$15.7 billion global millennial banking industry, Atlantis has launched Neo-Bank for Gen Z and millennials, a company release said. The financial value of

millennials to the banking system is expected to increase by almost 80 per cent in the next five years to more than \$27 billion from the current \$15.7 billion in revenue that millennials contribute.

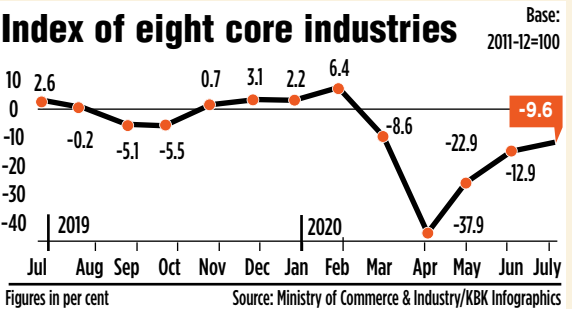
The company believes that customer-first intelligent systems and design will drive the future of neo-banking, it said. Neo banking is an online con-

cept where there are no physical branches of a bank and customers transact all services digitally.

The bank is looking to sign up not more than 3,000 users in the first three months as it aims to create a personalised experience for each of its users.

Currently, it accepts a new user either through a waitlist or an invite from an existing member — PTI

Core sector output contracts 9.6% in July



FC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, AUG. 31

With the phase-wise implementation of unlockdown, production in the country's eight core sectors has shown a slight improvement, contracting to -9.6 per cent in July against the -12.9 per cent contraction in June. This is the fifth consecutive month of contraction for the core industries, according to government data released on Monday.

The data on the core eight sectors—coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, fertiliser, steel, cement and electricity—comes ahead of the government further easing restrictions on the move-

ment and assembly of people in September in a staggered fashion.

The eight sectors collectively have a 40 per cent weightage on the Index of Industrial Production (IIP). Aditi Nayar, principal economist at Icmr, said that based on the available trends for the core sector, auto production and merchandise exports, "we expect the contraction in the Industrial Index of Production to ease to 7-11 per cent in July 2020 from 16.6 per cent in June 2020".

The production of 8 core sectors had expanded by 2.6 per cent in July 2019, the release said. Output of all sectors showed contraction in July except the fertiliser segment.

Fiscal deficit past full year target in four months

New Delhi, Aug. 31: India's federal fiscal deficit in the four months to end July stood at Rs 8.21 lakh crore (\$111.7 billion), or 103.1 per cent of the budgeted target for the current fiscal year, government data showed on Monday.

Net tax receipts were Rs 2.03 lakh crore while total expenditure was at Rs 10.5 lakh crore, the data showed, indicating the government had stepped up its spending to combat the impact of the coronavirus.

The deficit is predicted to cross 7.5 per cent of GDP in the 2020-21 fiscal year that began in April, private economists said, from initial government estimates of 3.5 per cent, mainly due to a sharp economic contraction triggered by the pandemic.

—Reuters

Emirates got \$2 billion of virus funding

ARCHANA NARAYANAN & LAYAN ODEH
AUG. 31

Dubai's government has put \$2 billion into Emirates since March to help its flagship airline sustain operations during the coronavirus pandemic.

The state indicated earlier in the year it was committed to providing financial support to the world's largest long-haul carrier. "Any further support will be subject to the airline's requirements and will depend on the impact and duration of the ongoing Covid-19 situation," according to the document.

Emirates was particularly hit by the pandemic as its business model is built around the biggest category of jets—Airbus SE A380s and Boeing 777s—carrying passengers between all corners of the globe. —Bloomberg



Demand for online doctors creates a \$39-bn titan

RICHARD MACAULEY
AUG. 31

Two decades ago, Itaru Tanimura ended a 12-year run at McKinsey & Co to lead M3 Inc, an online provider of medical information and services backed by entertainment giant Sony Corp.

What followed was a flurry of acquisitions that turned the Tokyo-based company into a \$39 billion global behemoth. M3 now has about 40 subsidiaries and affiliates, including MDLinx Inc. in the US and Britain's Doctors.net.uk.

M3 helps pharmaceutical companies, doctors and their patients access information online over its platforms, removing the need for in-person visits - something that proved important in the time of Covid-19. Its

shares have almost doubled this year, surging the most of any company in the Nikkei 225 Stock Average and taking the fortune of Tanimura to \$1.2 billion, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index.

"Online doctor capabilities are in the spotlight with Covid, as people are staying home," Jefferies Japan Ltd analyst Hiroko Sato said in an interview. "It's really a theme stock." A rush by smaller pharmaceutical companies to digitalize marketing materials after the coronavirus outbreak helped boost sales, with inquiries skyrocketing. M3's operating profit climbed 26 per cent in the quarter ended in June.

The company's name stands for "the three Ms of Medicine, Media and Metamorphosis," and its goal is to change medi-

cine by "making full use of the power of the Internet," according to its website.

Its acquisition-spre started in 2002, when M3 bought the Japanese unit of US medical portal site WebMD. MDLinx was acquired in 2006 and Doctors.net.uk in 2011. M3, which gets about three-quarters of its revenue from Japan, also has units in China, India and France. One of its US sub-

sidaries was selected to take part in Moderna Inc's Covid-19 vaccine study.

Tanimura, 55, is president and holds a 2.9 per cent stake in M3. Sony owns about a third of the company. M3 declined to comment for this story, while Sony didn't respond to phone calls and an email seeking comment.

The pandemic has produced vast wealth gains amongst both tech and

pharma titans. Amazon.com Inc's Jeff Bezos has amassed more than anyone else, with his fortune hitting \$200 billion, while Tencent Holdings Ltd's Pony Ma and Jiang Rensheng, the chairman of vaccine maker Chongqing Zhifei Biological Products Co, have added more than \$11 billion each.

While M3 said in its earnings report that Covid-19 disrupted some of its business, it always has Sony to lean on. The entertainment giant unveiled a \$100 million relief fund to help tackle the outbreak in April and funnelled some of that cash toward M3.

"Sony and M3 will be able to bring unprecedented ideas to the medical community," Tanimura said. —Bloomberg

SHORT TAKES

Root returns for ODIs, misses T20s

Manchester: England announced on Monday they had recalled several World Cup winners for their upcoming white-ball series against Australia but Test captain Joe Root has again been omitted from the Twenty20 squad. Fifty-over world champions England have been fielding separate red and white ball squads in a season hit by the coronavirus pandemic. But with all six Tests spanning two series wins against the West Indies and Pakistan now completed, England have recalled some of their multi-format players for next month's limited-overs matches against Australia. Root was the third-highest run-scorer at the 2016 T20 World Cup but has not played a T20 international for over a year, despite still wanting to feature in the format. He has, however, hit scores of 64 and 65 for Yorkshire in this season's Twenty20 Blast. — AFP

Birdie bomb lifts Rahm to victory

Washington: Jon Rahm drained a swinging 60-foot birdie putt at the first playoff hole on Sunday to win the US PGA Tour BMW Championship over world number one Dustin Johnson. Spain's Rahm, ranked second in the world behind Johnson, was in the right rough off the tee at the first playoff hole, the 18th at Olympia Fields near Chicago. His second shot rolled to the back of the green, leaving him what could have been a tough two-putt for par. "Never did I think I'd be making another 50-, 60-footer — couple of breaks in there, too — to end up winning it," said Rahm, who gave a roaring fist pump as the putt dropped. Johnson's tee shot was also off course, but ricocheted off a tree to settle in the fairway. The American found the middle of the green, but after Rahm's miraculous birdie effort, Johnson's birdie attempt settled inches from the cup. — AFP

Oly flame out on display in Tokyo

Tokyo: The Olympic flame is going on display in Tokyo, just a short walk from the new National Stadium where it was supposed to be burning a month ago. The flame arrived in Japan from Greece in March and has been largely hidden away in Tokyo since the Olympics were postponed until next year because of the Covid-19 pandemic. The flame was unveiled on Monday at a small ceremony with Yoshiro Mori, the president of the Tokyo Olympic organizing committee, and Yasuhiro Yamashita, the president of the Japanese Olympic Committee. The flame will be on display beginning Tuesday at the new Japan Olympic Museum for at least the next two months. Visitors can only enter the museum, which is located across the street from the new stadium, with a reservation. — AFP

Ewan takes Tour Stage 3 honours

Sisteron, France: Australian Caleb Ewan timed his effort to perfection to win the third stage of the Tour de France in a bunch sprint at the end of a 198-km hilly ride through the Alpine foothills on Monday. Sam Bennett looked in control but the Irishman had previously underestimated the headwind and settled for second place as he watched Lotto-Soudal fast-man Ewan whizz around him to snatch his fourth stage win on the Tour. Italian Giacomo Nizzolo took third place. — Reuters

Live on TV

CARIBBEAN PREMIER LEAGUE

Jamaica Tallawahs vs Trinbago Knight Riders from 7:30 pm; Guyana Amazon Warriors vs Barbados Tridents from 3 am (Tuesday) on Star Sports 1, 2, HD

CRICKET

England vs Pakistan third T20 from 10:30 pm on Sony Six, HD

TENNIS

US Open matches from 8:30 pm on Star Sports Select 1, HD

WWE RAW

Bouts from 5:30 am (Tuesday) on Sony Ten 1, 3, HD

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SURASH SHOT! CSK might part ways with its star Raina

New Delhi, Aug. 31: His exit from the IPL attributed to personal reasons this season, all-rounder Suresh Raina's stint with Chennai Super Kings seems in jeopardy even next year as the franchise might part ways with him before the 2021 edition.

The CSK camp based in Dubai reported 13 COVID-19 cases, including two main squad members Deepak Chahar and Ruturaj Gaikwad, a development which an IPL source said, played a role in the recently-retired India player's exit from the event starting September 19. However, it has now emerged that the team management was not particularly happy with the 32-year-old's "conduct" during the quarantine time, something which infuriated CSK owner and former BCCI president N. Srinivasan.

"In CSK, the norm is that the coach, captain and the manager get suites. However, Raina also gets a suite in any hotel that the franchise stays. It's just that his room didn't have a balcony," an IPL source said.

"It was an issue but I don't think big enough to warrant a comeback (to India). There could be something more than just the scare of rising COVID-caseload in Chennai," the source added, alluding to a speculated breach of the bio-bubble by Raina.

He said given the situation, Raina could well be gone for good now not only this season but also the next IPL scheduled in April, 2021. Is there a possibility of Raina coming back this season, thereby changing the circumstances?

"He is unavailable this season and that is clear from the official statement issued by the CSK. Now there are certain things that have not gone down too well with the top people," the source said.

"It looks highly improbable that someone who has retired



Royal Challenger Bangalore's AB de Villiers (centre) at a training session in Dubai.

and likely won't play any cricket will come back for CSK. Maybe, he will be back in auction and someone else might pick him."

CSK is punting heavily on young Ruturaj, expecting that he will come good once he completes the quarantine and rejoins the training session after two negative tests.

"CSK has not yet asked for an official replacement for Raina...they are undecided," the source added.

On the speculated bio-bubble breach, the source said an apology from Raina will have little impact given that the team is looking ahead. "I don't know about the apology part but CSK will now be eyeing to prepare

Ruturaj looking at the future and Dhoni and Fleming will rejig their strategy accordingly," the source added.

— PTI

Dhoni should bat at No. 3: Gambhir

New Delhi, Aug. 31:

Mahendra Singh Dhoni should be batting at number three for Chennai Super Kings now that Suresh Raina has pulled out of the Indian Premier League, feels former India opener Gautam Gambhir.

Raina pulled out of the IPL due to "personal reasons" and Gambhir thinks that Dhoni, who has been away from the game for over a year, should try and play as many balls possible.

"It will be a good opportunity for M.S. Dhoni to come and bat at No. 3," Gambhir said Gambhir said on Star Sports' show.

"And he has been away from the game for the last one year, so he would end up getting a lot more balls to face and then he can

● **Former India opener Gautam Gambhir said that M.S. Dhoni can come at one down as there are batsmen who can play the finishing game.**

actually play the anchor innings as well which he has been doing for India for the last couple of years," the two-time IPL-winning skipper said.

Gambhir said that Dhoni can come at one down as there are batsmen who can play the finishing game.

"So, MS Dhoni at No. 3 and then they have got depth with Kedar Jadhav, Dwayne Bravo, Sam Curran, all those guys they can come in." — PTI

DADA SEES HIGHEST IPL TV RATINGS

Pune, Aug. 31: Bullish about the IPL's success as a TV-only event, BCCI president Sourav Ganguly on Monday said he expects the T20 extravaganza to shatter viewership records this year.

The IPL begins on September 19 and will be played across three cities in the UAE — Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Sharjah.

"Crowds will watch it on television... they (the broadcasters) are actually expecting the highest rating of IPL this season because they believe if (people) don't turn up in the ground, they will be actually watching on their television sets," Ganguly said while delivering an online lecture as part of the 'Symbiosis Golden Jubilee Lecture Series'.

"There is a positive in everything," he added. Ganguly also said holding the IPL was important to ensure a sense of normalcy amid the pandemic.

Asked how cricketers would feel about playing in front of empty stands, Ganguly said, "...because of the COVID and infection, you don't want people to be too close to each other; but very soon you will see there will be 30 per cent people in the ground with social distancing."

"They are properly tested and allowed to enter the ground. But I think that is going to happen over a period of time," he added referring to the possibility of IPL's later matches being opened for fans depending on the COVID-19 situation.

"...it is actually an effort to bring life back to normal. This will go on for another five-six months till the vaccine comes and I am sure everything then will be back to normal," he asserted. — PTI

US OPEN | TENNIS

Kerber cruises into 2nd round

New York, Aug. 31: Former champion Angelique Kerber returned to action for the first time in seven months and beat Australian Ajla Tomljanovic 6-4, 6-4 on Monday to reach the second round of the U.S. Open.

The 17th-seeded German, who entered the match having not competed since the fourth round of the Australian Open, overcame a shaky start on serve and got better as the 88-minute match at Louis Armstrong Stadium wore on.

Kerber, a three-times Grand Slam champion who triumphed at Flushing Meadows in 2016, traded breaks with Tomljanovic through the first four games of the match and then found her footing to take over the match.

The German southpaw converted all three break point chances to pull ahead 5-4 and then went on to serve out at love to grab the first set.

In the second, Kerber settled into a groove and broke her opponent twice before sealing the win on her third match point when a Tomljanovic forehand sailed long.

The US Open is the first Grand Slam to be contested since the Covid-19 pandemic shutdown global tennis in March.

Meanwhile, Novak Djokovic sets out on his quest for an 18th Grand

Slam title at the US Open with his world number one standing enhanced in the latest ATP rankings released on Monday.

Fresh from his success in the ATP Western & Southern Open final against Milos Raonic, the Serb headlines the opening day at Flushing Meadows where he faces Damir Dzumhur of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

He leads the ATP chart on 10860 points from Rafael Nadal who like fourth-ranked Roger Federer is skipping the rescheduled US Open being held under tight Covid-19 health restrictions.

While Djokovic heads an unchanged top 10, Raonic jumps 12 places to 18th on the back of his run to Saturday's decider in the US Open tune-up.

OSAKA CLIMBS TO NINTH IN RANKINGS

Naomi Osaka climbed one place to number nine in the new WTA rankings, which were released on Monday.

Osaka, who is scheduled to meet fellow Japanese Misaki Doi in the first round at Flushing Meadows, pulled out of Saturday's final because of a left hamstring injury.

Australian Ashleigh Barty retains the top spot although neither she nor world number two Simona Halep are taking part in the US Open.

— Agencies

CELTICS ROUT RAPTORS IN NBA SERIES OPENER

Miami, Aug. 31: Jayson Tatum and Marcus Smart each scored 21 points to lead the Boston Celtics over defending champion Toronto 112-94 in Sunday's opening game of their second-round NBA playoff series.

Kemba Walker added 18 points and 10 assists for the Celtics, who also had 17 points from Jaylen Brown plus 13 points and 15 rebounds from Daniel Theis.

"Marcus today was unbelievable on both ends," Celtics coach Brad Stevens said.

"All our guys played with great purpose, great enthusiasm. We just have to clean some stuff up."

Game two of the best-of-seven Eastern Conference series comes Tuesday in

the spectator-free COVID-19 quarantine bubble at Disney World in Orlando, Florida. "We just need to follow the game plan and play with purpose and compete and that's what we did," Tatum said.

"They are not going to give up. Every game is going to be a dogfight." Boston frustrated Toronto shooters, the Raptors going 31-of-84 from the floor and 10-of-40 from 3-point range — the most 3-point misses ever by Toronto in a playoff contest.

"We just didn't play well enough to win," said guard Kyle Lowry, who led Toronto with 17 points despite a sore left ankle. "We've got to do our coverages harder, execute better." — AFP

Recognise chess players: Anand

C. SANTHOSH KUMAR
CHENNAI, AUG. 31

The first online chess Olympiad that witnessed an anticlimactic finish due to a global internet outage has triggered controversy after India and Russia were declared joint winners. Russian grandmaster Daniil Dubov didn't mince words when he termed the event a "circus" and said "don't just call it an Olympiad and it was a failure."

The controversial ending, however, didn't stop the Indian team from celebrating their maiden Olympiad gold by organising an online meeting where each member of the side spoke about the memorable day.

During the final, India's Nihal Sarin and Divya Deshmukh were disconnected from the host server. Viswanathan Anand said the global internet outage wasn't India's fault. "We did nothing wrong. We were ready for anything. We were ready to play two games or even six games. Fide looked at the big picture," Anand said.

There was a hint of disappointment when Anand spoke about the lack of recognition for chess players in the past few years. "There's been a drop off in the attitude of the Sports Ministry towards chess players. I don't mean at a personal level obviously. Just that institutionally, we no longer get the awards

for international competitions," said Anand.

The veteran player from Chennai feels the issues in the All India Chess Federation could be a reason for the awards snub. "I think some of it might be due to various issues they have brought up pertaining to the code of conduct and so on. And our federation has had some difficulties. But it would be nice to reset this," he said.

Anand said the best way to change the scenario is not by writing long letters to the editor but by having good results like the Olympiad success.

"I hope that this result will have a positive impact and that they will look at chess as they did years ago. Several years ago they had recognised this as one of the sports where we do incredibly well...and that we have a good team. And I hope this will have an impact and we will once again start coming in for Arjuna and Dronacharya awards," he added.

Grandmaster P. Harikrishna said it's the responsibility of the federation to take up this issue. "It is sad that none of the chess players have won an Arjuna Award or Dronacharya Award for several years. But these are not the reasons why chess players are playing the game. These are however small things that the govt and federation can take up," he noted.

Lyon ladies leap for joy



Lyon players run towards the trophy after beating VFL Wolfsburg in the UEFA Women's Champions League football final in San Sebastian, Spain, on Sunday. Lyon won 3-1 to win their fifth straight Champions League. — AFP

Bindra's gold thrill lasted 2 seconds

New Delhi, Aug. 31: Olympic champion Abhinav Bindra says the thrill — the biggest of his life — lasted merely two seconds after his gold at Beijing Games where relief was the first and only emotion he felt despite scripting history.

A web series titled 'The Finish Line' has been conceptualised to relive eight defining moments of Indian sports through the athletes themselves. And Bindra was the first guest to feature on the show hosted by ace squash player

Saurav Ghosal.

"It was the greatest emotion that I had felt. I was very happy as this moment was the biggest thrill of my life, that thrill lasted for two seconds and that's it," Bindra said on the show, recalling the moment 12 years later.

"The greatest emotion I felt at that moment was the feeling of relief because, throughout my journey, I have been very obsessive with my goal.

"All my eggs were in one basket, certainly not the way I promote to young

● **Bindra remains India's only individual gold medalist at the Olympics and he came tantalisingly close to adding another podium finish at the 2016 Rio Games, only to miss out by a point.**

athletes. It was a huge amount of relief that, what I had set out to do in my life, I was able to

achieve that."

Bindra remains India's only individual gold medalist at the Olympics and he came tantalisingly close to adding another podium finish at the 2016 Rio Games, only to miss out by a point.

While it is documented, Bindra recalled how he carried on with his shooting after finding out that his gun had been tampered with just before the big final in Beijing.

"Just five minutes before the big final, I realised that the sight of my gun

had been altered just a little bit. There was complete panic that was running through my head, but funnily enough, going into Beijing I had also trained for it.

"I was frozen for a moment though and had no clue what to do but giving up was not an option. I decided that I have to fight, hence I got up and tried to get my sights working in order. From there on I shot the best 10 shot of my life that eventually got me the medal." — PTI