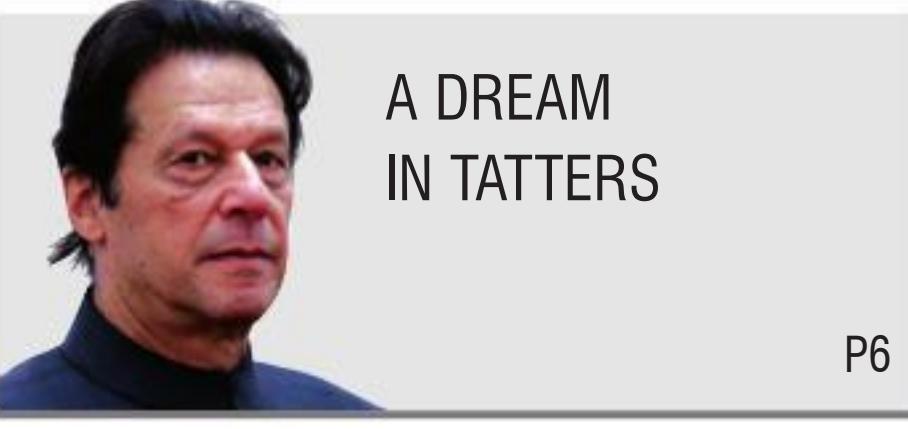




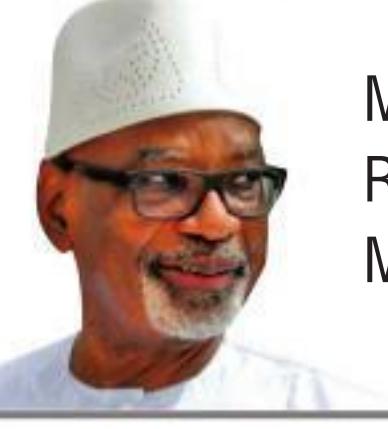
NAVY PREPARED  
TO MEET ANY  
CHALLENGE: RAJNATH

P5



A DREAM  
IN TATTERS

P6



MALI PRESIDENT  
RESIGNS AFTER  
MILITARY COUP

P9



WHY AZAM IS SO  
IMPORTANT  
TO PAKISTAN

P12

## WEATHER

Generally cloudy sky with moderate rain/thundershowers. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 31 and 25 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: 032.2 mm

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 100% Min: 86%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 27.7°C (6) Min: 26.4°C (0)

SUN RISES SUN SETS

05:44 hrs 18:55 hrs

MOON RISES MOON SETS

08:01 hrs 20:09 hrs

## THUMBNAILS



Fireworks are launched on the occasion of the 416th anniversary of the installation of the Guru Granth Sahib (Sikh holy book) at the Golden Temple in Amritsar on Wednesday.

AFP

**ED intervenes in VBU row:** The ED waded into the Visva Bharati row on Wednesday, seeking copies of the FIRs filed by rival groups over Monday's violence to probe whether "organised money laundering" was the reason behind the affray that forced the closure of the institution, officials said. Sources in the anti-money laundering agency said it has sent separate communications to the Birbhum Superintendent of Police and university authorities seeking copies of the FIRs.

P5

**Pandit Jasraj:** The mortal remains of Indian classical vocalist Pandit Jasraj, who passed away on Monday following a cardiac arrest at his home in New Jersey, would be brought to Mumbai on Wednesday, his family said in a statement. The 90-year-old music doyen, who belonged to the Mewati Gharana, was in the US when the coronavirus-led lockdown was announced and decided to stay on there. According to the family, Pandit Jasraj's 'antim darshan' will be held on Thursday at his Versova residence, followed by the last rites at a Vile Parle crematorium.

US Democrats nominate Biden for epic challenge to oust Trump



Democrats have officially named Joe Biden as their presidential candidate with several of their elder statesmen lauding the former US vice president's leadership skills to challenge incumbent Republican President Donald Trump in November.

Two Democratic former presidents, Bill Clinton and Jimmy Carter, and former secretary of state John Kerry endorsed Biden on Tuesday, the second day of the Democratic National Convention. Former secretary of state Colin Powell, a Republican, also backed Biden's candidacy.

Biden, 77, became the Democratic Party's nominee for the November 3 presidential election on Tuesday night in a pre-recorded roll call vote from delegates in all 50 states.

He said the nomination "means the world to me and my family, and I'll see you on Thursday," referring to his speech accepting the nomination on the final night of the four-day convention which is largely virtual, amid the coronavirus pandemic. It is the honour of my life to accept the Democratic Party's nomination for President of the United States of America, Biden tweeted later.

Biden's wife, Jill, made a strong pitch for him, saying that if elected, he would bring to the White House "leadership worthy of our nation" at a time of an unprecedented pandemic and economic depression. PTI

DETAILS ON PAGE 10

## SC clears CBI probe into Rajput's death

'Impartial investigations' need of the hour, says court

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 19 AUGUST

**T**he Supreme Court on Wednesday ordered a CBI probe into the unnatural death of Sushant Singh Rajput under Article 142 of the Constitution.

The court said that its power under Article 142(1) to do "complete justice" is entirely of a different level and of a different quality.

A single-judge Bench of Justice Hrishikesh Roy upheld the validity of the FIR registered into the death by Bihar Police on the complaint filed by Rajput's father. Justice Roy turned down the Maharashtra government's arguments that ordinarily, the local police should conduct investigation into any reported crime and entrustment of the investigation to the CBI must be an exception to meet extraordinary exigencies, and the consent given by the Bihar government was for political exigencies.

The court said the obstructions for the Bihar Police team in Mumbai while investigating the FIR registered by the deceased actor's father should have been avoided as it gave rise to suspicion on the bona fides of Mumbai Police's inquiry.

"In the instant case, the petitioner reposed confidence on Mumbai Police. The records of the case produced before this Court does not prima facie suggest any wrongdoing by the Mumbai Police. However, their obstruction to the Bihar Police team at Mumbai could have been avoided since it gave rise to suspicion on the bona fides of Mumbai Police's inquiry."

Justice Roy, at the same time, said Mumbai Police had jurisdiction in the case



owing to the fact that certain incidents, including the death of the actor, happened there.

"The peculiar circumstances in this case require that complete justice is done in this matter. How this is to be achieved must now be decided," Justice Roy said. He noted that Bihar and Maharashtra governments are making acrimonious allegations of political interference against each other, and the legitimacy of the investigation has come under a cloud.

"These developments unfortunately have the propensity to delay and misdirect the investigation. In such a situation, there is reasonable apprehension of truth being a casualty and justice becoming a victim," he observed.

Justice Roy said to ensure public confidence in the investigation and to do complete justice in the matter, the Court considers it appropriate to invoke the powers conferred by Article 142 of the Constitution. The order came on the petition filed by Sushant's girlfriend Rhea Chakraborty seeking transfer of the case from Patna to Mumbai.

Justice Roy said to ensure public confidence in the investigation and to do complete justice in the matter, the Court considers it appropriate to invoke the powers conferred by Article 142 of the Constitution. The order came on the petition filed by Sushant's girlfriend Rhea Chakraborty seeking transfer of the case from Patna to Mumbai.

## Covid recoveries cross 20L; fatality rate 1.91 pc

Delhi reports 1,398 fresh Covid cases, 9 deaths

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 19 AUGUST

With as many 60,091 people recovering from coronavirus infection in a day, the total recoveries on Wednesday crossed 2 million, pushing the recovery rate to 73.64 per cent, while the Covid-19 case fatality rate hit a new low of 1.91 per cent, the Union Health Ministry said, even as the country added 64,531 fresh confirmed Covid cases.

Total recoveries have surged to 20,37,870 in the country, while there are 6,76,514 active cases of Covid-19, according to the data updated at 8 a.m.

The high recoveries have ensured that active cases of coronavirus infection, the "actual caseload" of the country, currently comprises less than 1/4th (only 24.45 per cent) of the total cases.

Higher number of recoveries and declining fatality has shown that India's graded

strategy has worked. India has posted 13,61,356 more recoveries than there are active cases, it said.

"With high number of Covid-19 patients recovering and being discharged from hospitals and home isolation, the recovery rate has scaled the peak of reaching 73.64 per

cent. This has also led to the declining case fatality rate, which stands at a new low of 1.91 per cent today," the ministry said.

With 64,531 people testing positive in a day, India's Covid-19 tally increased to 27,67,273 on Wednesday, while the death toll climbed to 52,889 with

August and 16 August, the deaths due to Covid-19 have been 14 or less except on 17 August when the figure of fatalities was 18.

Today, Delhi recorded 9 Covid deaths, which pushed the death toll in the city due to the infectious, dreaded disease to 4,235, the bulletin said. On August 11, the city had reportedly recorded eight Covid fatalities, the lowest recorded in a day in over a month's time.

1,092 people succumbing to the disease in a span of 24 hours, the data showed.

The country had touched the 20-lakh mark on August 7 and has added over 7-lakh cases in the next 12 days. As far as the death toll is concerned, the country had registered its first death on March 13 and

crossed the 25,000-mark on July 17 and added the next 27,000 deaths in the span of a month.

UNION HEALTH MINISTRY FIGURES AS OF 8.00 A.M.  
WEDNESDAY 19 AUGUST 2020

**FACT FILE**  
**TOTAL CASES**  
**27,67,273**  
**ACTIVE CASES**  
**6,76,514**  
**NEW CASES**  
**64,531**  
**NEW RECOVERIES**  
**60,091**  
**TOTAL DEATHS**  
**52,889**

## Centre moves to withdraw 10K CAPF troops from J&K

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 19 AUGUST

were taken out in December last year.

A senior official told PTI that a total of 100 CAPF companies have been ordered to be withdrawn "immediately" on Wednesday and they have been asked to revert to their base locations in the country.

This is the biggest de-induction of these forces after additional troops were rushed to the UT with the abrogation of the Article 370 of the Constitution that gave the erstwhile state a unique status.

Their decision

was taken after the Ministry of Home Affairs reviewed the deployment of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) in the union territory (UT).

The Home Ministry had last withdrawn 10 CAPF companies from the UT in May, while 72 such units

As per the directions, a total of 40 companies of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and 20 each of the Central Industrial Security Force, the Border Security Force and the Sashastra Seema Bal, will be taken out from Jammu and Kashmir by this week.

With the latest de-induction, the lead counter-terrorist force CRPF will have a strength of about 60 battalions (about 1,000 personnel in each battalion) in the Kashmir valley apart from very few units of the other Central paramilitary forces.

## Priyanka favours non-Gandhi to lead Cong; party wants Rahul

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 19 AUGUST



Leaders, she is quoted as saying that Rahul was her leader and will always be.

Though the book was released recently by Oxford University Press, the Congress said Priyanka's interview was con-

ducted after Rahul stepped down as party president taking responsibility for the 2019 Lok Sabha poll drubbing.

Sonia Gandhi is the interim president of the party and there has been a growing

demand in the Congress for return of Rahul as chief.

In the book, which features interviews with young leaders in India, Priyanka told authors Pradeep Chhibber and Harsh Shah, "He (Rahul Gandhi) has said that none of us should be the president of the party and I am in full agreement with him. I think that the party should find its own path also."

Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala today said the remarks were a year old and made on July 1, 2019 by Priyanka and its context today is to take on the vicious attack on India's polity by the current dispensation and fight it fearlessly.

In 2019, Rahul showed the courage of conviction and stepped down as Congress president, Surjewala said.

Noting that none in her family look at things like that, Priyanka said if there were to be another party president, "He would be my boss. If he tells me tomorrow that he doesn't want me in Uttar Pradesh but wants me to be in Andaman and Nicobar, then I would jolly well go to Andaman and Nicobar."

"It depends on me - I could say 'sorry I don't care, I'm going to do what I want. But, I don't think that any of us have that attitude. I think that we actually believe in the democratization of our party," she added.

On her and Rahul's role going forward, Priyanka is quoted as saying, "If we could enable that process of actually empowering other young people to participate and become leaders, then we would have achieved something. I see that as my role."



Both (Shiromani Akali Dal or Aam Aadmi Party) the parties seemed bent on playing with the sentiments of the people, whose only concern at present was to protect themselves from the coronavirus

CAPTAIN AMARINDER SINGH  
PUNJAB CHIEF MINISTER

# DDMA approves reopening of hotels, weekly markets in city

Delhi's weekly markets will be opened on a trial basis; DDMA however does not okay reopening of gyms

SNS & PTI

NEW DELHI, 19 AUGUST

The Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) today gave its approval for the reopening of hotels and weekly markets in Delhi—a move that is expected to help revive the city's economy devastated by the novel coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic and months of lockdown.

The proposal to reopen gyms in the city, however, failed to get the DDMA's approval, said a statement issued by the Delhi government.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the DDMA, which was also attended by chief minister Arvind Kejriwal through video conference.

"The coronavirus situation in Delhi is much better now and the economy has to be now brought on track," Kejriwal said, urging all stakeholders to maintain social distancing and follow other precautionary measures against coronavirus.

The proposal to reopen gyms was not approved at the meeting of the DDMA headed by Lt Governor Anil Baijal. The LG said gyms could be allowed to open in the coming days.

The weekly markets will be first opened on trial basis to assess the situation on the ground.



Hotels, weekly markets and gyms were closed in Delhi along with many establishments with the announcement of the lockdown in March in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak.

"All hotels in Delhi to open after the proposal of the Delhi government was approved at the DDMA meeting," said the Delhi government statement.

Kejriwal said that the Delhi government's proposal for opening all the hotels in the city was earlier rejected by

the central government.

"We again requested the central government and we are happy that now the proposal has been approved. Now all hotels in Delhi will be opened. At the same time, the weekly market will be opened on a trial basis. In the meantime, everyone must exercise precautions and follow social distancing," he said.

The DDMA's decision was hailed by many hotel and restaurant associations as well traders bodies.

They welcomed the CM's efforts to get the hotels and weekly markets reopened in Delhi.

"DHROA wholeheartedly thanks Arvind Kejriwal... The decision to open the hotel is a new ray of life given to us. It is a step to provide livelihood and employment opportunities. The move will also make migrant workers happy," Delhi Hotels & Restaurant's Owner's Association (DHROA) wrote to the CM, according to the statement.

In the last week of July, the Kejriwal government had decided to allow hotels and gyms to reopen in the city, and start weekly markets on a trial basis for seven days with social distancing and all other Covid measures in place.

However, on July 31, LG Baijal "rejected" Delhi government's decision to allow hotels and weekly markets under Unlock 3, citing the fragile situation due to coronavirus pandemic in the city.

The Delhi government sent

a fresh proposal to the LG on August 6, seeking his permission to allow hotels, gymnasium, and weekly markets to reopen in the national capital.

The fresh proposal sent by Delhi Revenue minister Kailash Gehlot had advocated opening of hotels and weekly markets, saying that the condition of Delhi was improving and the number of Covid cases were coming down.

In the fresh request, the Delhi government observed that the situation in Delhi was fast improving and economic activities needed to be opened up so that people affected with four months of lockdown could resume their jobs and businesses while following laid down anti-Covid guidelines.

"After having successfully brought COVID situation under control, it is a challenge to bring the economy back on track. Opening up these two sectors will help in that direction," said the government statement.

The hotels contribute to 8 per cent of Delhi's GDP and employment. Weekly bazaars provide employment to 5 lakh poor families, it added.

The crucial meeting of the DDMA to discuss reopening of city hotels and gymnasium in view of the current Covid scenario in the national capital was scheduled to be held yesterday but it was deferred till today.

Gahlot flags off 30 new vehicles for Transport Dept's enforcement wing



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 19 AUGUST

469 officers and 94 civil defence volunteers, the Enforcement Wing has been engaged in ensuring safety and order on Delhi roads along with the Delhi Traffic Police. In 2020, the Enforcement Wing has issued 42,404 challans and impounded 7,891 vehicles so far.

Moreover, during the lockdown due to Covid-19, the Enforcement Wing personnel have been "active participants" in the government's efforts to control the movement of

people within Delhi. They issued 11,863 challans during the lockdown period.

Flagging off new enforcement vehicles from Raigat Cluster Depot, Gahlot said, "The Enforcement Wing has been active participants in all major road safety and environment-related initiatives in Delhi, including the odd-even road rationing scheme.

In addition to these activities, the Enforcement Wing has 50 teams deployed across the city for checking vehicles at more than 120 entry points in areas bordering the neighbouring states.

The

Delhi government's

statement stated that the

Enforcement Wing of the

Transport

Department is mandated to enforce the provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, prosecute non-compliant vehicles entering Delhi and implement the Supreme Court Road Safety Committee's orders.

With a current strength of

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With a current strength of

LG grants age relaxation for appointment of special educators in MCD schools, HC informed

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 19 AUGUST

The Delhi High Court has been informed that the Lieutenant Governor has granted relaxation of age for appointment of special educators in the municipal corporation schools.

DSSSB told the court that as sought by South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SCMC), the LG has also granted one-time relaxation of Central Teacher Eligibility Test (CTET) qualification to those who had obtained it after the cut-off date but before their appointment.

Besides, the LG has granted age relaxation of 10 years even if they may have become over age for the post of spe-

cial educator (primary).

Justice Sanjeev Sachdeva granted a week's time to DSSSB to file a status report on the issue and asked the counsel for SDMC to seek further instructions and file a status report.

The court listed the matter for further hearing on August 28.

During the hearing advocate Avnish Ahlawat, appearing for Delhi Subordinate Services Selection Board (DSSSB), submitted that it has already finalised the result and forwarded the dossier to SDMC which is at liberty to proceed further in accordance with the result published by the board and the relaxation granted by the LG.

## DANGEROUS CONDITIONS



A worker cleans a sewer without having any safety equipment during the rain amid the Covid pandemic near Zakhira underpass in the Capital on Wednesday.

DEEPAK

# The Statesman

## KOLKATA

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4, Chowringhee Square  
Kolkata-700 001  
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(033) 41071700  
Fax: (033) 2212-6181 / 7107-1780  
Email: thestatesman@vsnl.com  
statesmandisplay@gmail.com  
statesmanclassified@gmail.com

## SHELFALI BARNAL TANDAN

Administrative Civil Judge-cum-Additional Rent Controller (Central)  
Room No. 323, Third Floor  
Tis Hazari Court, Delhi  
Petition No. SC/59/2020  
N.D.O.H : 05-10-2020  
Khushant Jolly  
Versus  
The State & Ors.  
Khushant Jolly, s/o Late Sh. Sanjhi Ram Jolly, r/o 8816/3/3rd Floor, Multani Dhandha, Paharganj, New Delhi-110055  
— Petitioner  
FOR SUCCESSION CERTIFICATE UNDER INDIAN SUCCESSION ACT, 1925  
To All Concerned.  
Whereas in the abovenoted petition the applicant/petitioner has applied for Succession Certificate to the Hon'ble Court Under Section 372 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925 in respect of the debt and securities amount of Rs. xxx. As per record to be standing in the name of Late Sh. Sanjhi Ram Jolly, s/o Late Sh. Kirpa Ram deceased.

## CHANGE OF NAME

## TENDERS

## NOTICE

## NOTICE — Inviting e-Tender — Sealed tenders are hereby invited from the eligible contractors in connection with the execution of 10 Nos. of schemes. The details of the NLET No. WBSRDA-MSD-04 / MNTS / 2020-21 will be available in the MZP website & will also be available in the website: http://wbttenders.gov.in

## Executive Engineer WBSRDA Murshidabad Division

## BY VIRTUE of an affidavit before the Notary Dt. 06.08.20, Bhadrak I, Sri Gadadhar Behera, S/o. Gayadhar Behera of At/P.O.: Langudi, P.S.: Bhadrak (R), District: Bhadrak, am an Army employee bearing No. 14624693P, rank: Havildar, I want to state that by mistake in my service book my wife's name was wrongly mentioned as Prangya Sushmita instead of Prangya Suchita Behera. Henceforth, she will be known as Prangya Suchita Behera for all purposes.

## Gadadhar Behera

## WEST Bengal Text Book Corporation Ltd. & Saraswati Press Ltd. invites separately sealed offers from genuine buyers of paper scrap for disposal of Water soaked Paper reel, sheet Paper & Damage Books. Tender should be submitted within 29th August, 2020 by 2 p.m. For details and any amendment please visit our website: www.saraswatypress.com & www.wbtextbookcorporation.com

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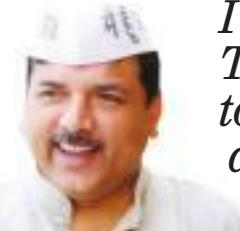
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*I wanted to tell UP CM that he is running a government for the Thakurs and I don't have any problem, but when the BJP govt tortures the poor people of other communities, then it becomes a very condemnable act*

SANJAY SINGH  
AAP LEADER

The Statesman  
NEW DELHI, THURSDAY 20 AUGUST 2020

03

# Capt orders stern measures to check pilferage of spirits

In the wake of the Punjab hooch tragedy, CM orders stringent measures, including GPS linkage and tamper-proof sealing, to curb in-transit pilferage of ethanol, spirits etc in the state

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, 19 AUGUST

To break the nexus between manufacturers and transporters of the kind that led to the recent hooch tragedy in Punjab — which claimed the lives of over 120 people across the state — Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh on Wednesday ordered stringent measures, including mandatory Global Positioning System (GPS) linkage, to check in-transport pilferage of ethanol, spirits and other products by unscrupulous elements for use in the manufacture of illicit liquor in the state.

From 5 September, no vehicles in the state will be



allowed to transport such products without tamper-proof sealing and GPS enabling

as per the directives issued on Wednesday by excise commissioner Rajat Agarwal on

the CM's orders.

The GPS co-ordinates of the vehicle will need to be preserved by the unit for a period of not less than 15 days from the date of completion of delivery of a consignment, according to the directives, aimed at providing checks on transportation of Extra Neutral Alcohol (ENA), Ethanol, Specially Denatured Spirit (SDS), Denatured Spirit (DNS) and Rectified Spirit (RS) by the distilleries.

The tamper-proof sealing of the tankers will be done by the distillery units before dispatch and the seal will be broken only by the recipient under the new rules. Both dispatch and receiving units will have to maintain records and certifications to this effect

for each tanker/truck, said Agarwal.

In no case the transport vehicle will be allowed to stop enroute its destination within the state of Punjab, except in case of breakdown, when the manufacturing unit shall be duty-bound to inform the Excise Officer Incharge of the unit within a period of not more than 15 minutes of such breakdown.

The seals on the outlet of the transport vehicle must be kept intact and not broken in any way in such instances, said the excise commissioner.

If the breakdown necessitates transfer of the material to another vehicle, the same will be done in the presence of or in accordance with the instructions of an

Excise Officer of the jurisdiction in which the breakdown has occurred.

In case the vehicle stops enroute within the jurisdiction of the state of Punjab for reasons other than breakdown, it would be assumed that the vehicle has been stopped for pilferage and should such a scenario arise, the distillery and the transporter will be jointly and severally liable for civil or criminal action as per the law.

Further, it will be the responsibility of the receiving unit to ensure that the entire contents of the material purchased and carried in the transport vehicle have been unloaded and there is no residue material in the transport vehicle.

HP may carve out 228 new Gram Panchayats



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 19 AUGUST

al areas new Gram Panchayats from those existing gram Panchayats will be created, where total population is equal to and more than 750, subject to the condition that minimum resultant population of the existing and newly proposed Gram Panchayat before and after bifurcation is minimum 300.

The Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Minister informed that more than 470 proposals have been received in the department which are being examined on above criteria and new Panchayats will be created from those Panchayats which will fulfil the criteria.

The draft notification in this regard will be issued on which residents of the concerned Gram Sabha can file objections before the concerned Deputy Commissioner within the period of seven days. The DCs will decide the same within the three days and send their recommendations to the Department enabling the state government to issue final notification. Kanwar said that about 220 gram Panchayats in the non-tribal areas and eight Gram Panchayats in the tribal areas are falling under the approved criteria.

"Meaning thereby there is possibility of creation of 228 new Gram Panchayats in the state," he said.

## HP Cong accuses Thakur govt of ignoring apple growers' concerns

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 19 AUGUST

record of farmers and businessmen on arrival and departure.

Besides, no thermal scanning is being done and most importantly, there is no check on drivers, involved in transportation of apple, about their travel history that raises questions on arrangements made by the government in view of COVID-19," he added.

Rathore said Congress party had cautioned the state government on the issue of the shortage of labour well on time but still no proper arrangements were made, making it difficult for the growers to harvest apple crop.

Further, the condition of quarantine centres where labourers were being kept,



were dismal as 20 to 25 people were being made to stay in a single room and use one washroom.

Rathore further stated that the state government was incompetent to deal COVID-19 situation and advised the

government to maintain proper record of persons entering and exiting markets besides conducting thermal screening of everyone.

He also raised concern over scab disease in apple belts and said the Horticulture minister was informed about the issue by the horticulture experts well in time but due to his sheer negligence, the apple growers were facing heavy losses to their crops.

"The scab disease first appeared in apple crop in 1982 and continued for 3 years till 1985 but the Congress government at that time made sure that all scab effected apples were purchased and financial assistance was provided to the farmers," he said.

He urged Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur to follow suit and provide financial aid to farmers whose apple crop was affected by scab.

Rathore also lashed out at State Horticulture minister Mahender Singh Thakur for his inaction on Rs 1134 crore World Bank project for Horticulture and said if timely action was taken, it wouldn't have lapsed and besides, the farmers wouldn't have to face any problems.

He further urged the Chief Minister to immediately issue e-Covid passes to the horticulturists going out of state to sell their apple crop as delay in passes could badly affect their highly perishable crop.

Fire breaks out at power station in Noida, no casualty

PTI  
NOIDA, 19 AUGUST

A major fire broke out at a power station in Greater Noida on Wednesday morning, officials said.

One was hurt in the fire that broke out in a transformer at the power station of Noida Power Company Limited (NPCIL) in Sector 148. The blaze was reported around 8:30 AM, the officials said. Thick smoke billowed from the power station and could be seen in the sky from a distance.

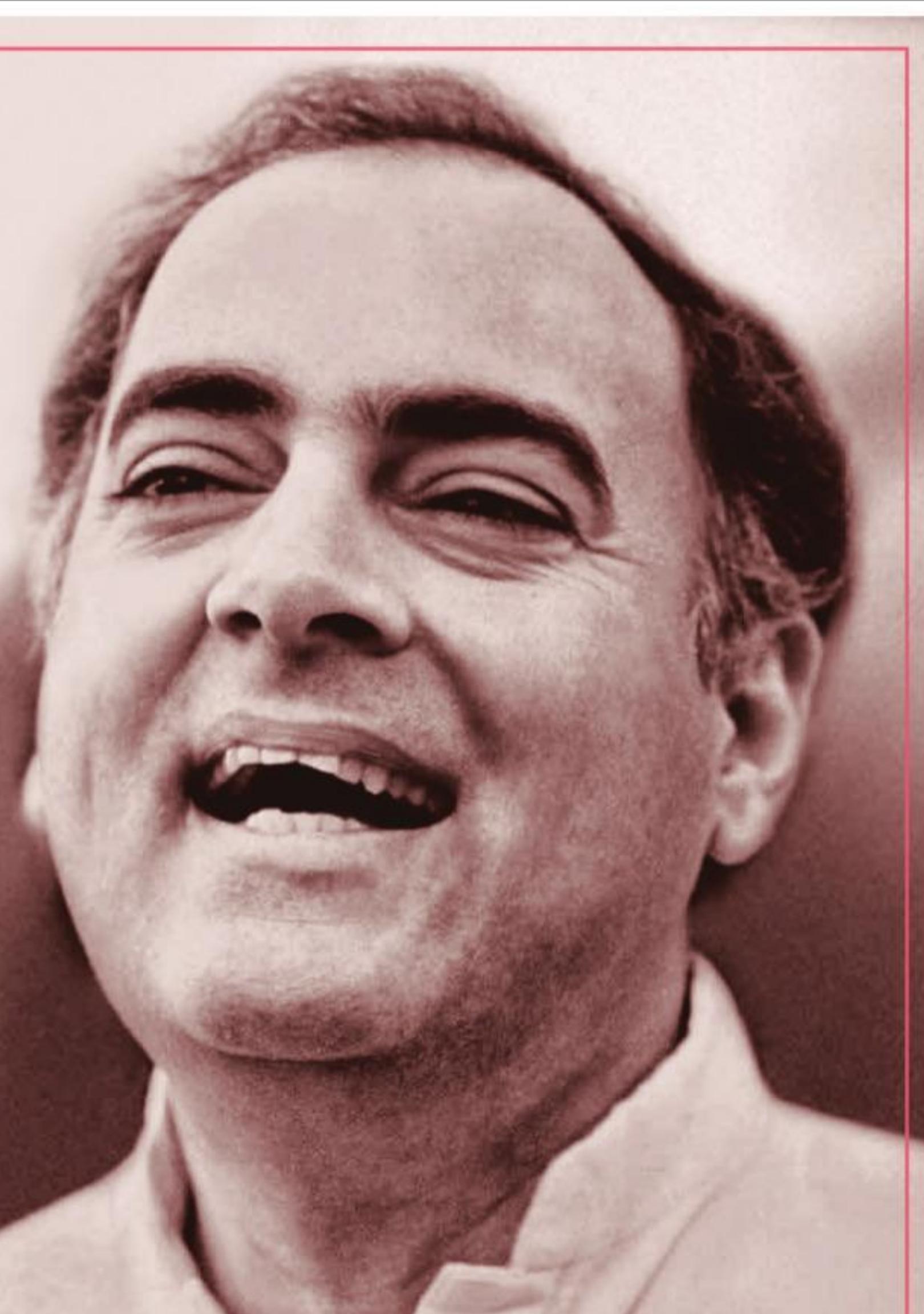
It was controlled by 10:30 AM. The cause of the fire is yet to be ascertained, according to police officials.

## Remembering Shri Rajiv Gandhi

(20th August, 1944 – 21st May, 1991)

former Prime Minister of India  
on his

76th BIRTH ANNIVERSARY



"He believed in the power of India. His vision of the 21st century shaped the destiny of our nation. His dreams enabled the realization of the rising aspirations of our people. Let us remember Rajiv Gandhi today with the promise of translating his conviction into the shared reality of the new India he saw for all of us."

- Capt. Amarinder Singh  
Chief Minister, Punjab



Congress leadership to decide who will work in the government and who will work in the party organisation

CONGRESS LEADER SACHIN PILOT

THANKING CONGRESS PRESIDENT FOR PROMPT ACTION OF FORMING THREE-MEMBER PANEL



## '6.6 lakh people in Hyderabad may be corona infected'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
HYDERABAD, 19 AUGUST

A study of sewage water samples has put the number of potentially infected people in Hyderabad at 6.6 lakh in a city of roughly one crore population, including symptomatic, asymptomatic and recently recovered patients within a time span of 35 days.

The collaborative study conducted jointly by CSIR institutions of Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) and Indian Institute of Chemical Technology (IITC) revealed a conservative estimate of the number of active cases shedding the virus may be around 2.6 lakh.

Individuals infected by the virus is not only through nasal and oral routes but also through faeces which is non-infectious and suitable for

epidemiological study and hence gives an opportunity to use sewage water samples to estimate the spread of the infection.

"Our findings clearly indicate a large proportion of the affected individuals are asymptomatic and did not need hospitalisation. This is in agreement with the observation that hospitalisation rush or mortality is way lower than otherwise expected with such a large infection rates at a given time."

"It explains why our health-care system has been able to handle reasonably well the situation during the pandemic," explained Dr Rakesh Mishra, director, CCMB.

The study covered 80 per cent of the sewage plants in Hyderabad and revealed there were two lakh people shedding viral materials.

## India, China to hold talks amid stalled disengagement process

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 19 AUGUST

Senior diplomats of India and China are expected to hold talks tomorrow under the framework of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC) on border affairs to discuss disengagement and de-escalation at eastern Ladakh amid Chinese troops' refusal to move back from Pangong Tso areas.

This will be the fourth time that the WMCC will meet since a tense military stand-off began between India and China in early May.

The Indian delegation will be headed by Naveen Srivastava, Joint Secretary (East Asia) in the External Affairs Ministry while the Director-General of the Boundary and Oceanic Department of the

Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs will lead the Chinese side.

The meeting is significant since the Chinese side, despite making promises to retreat at some of the friction points, has not done so, much to India's disappointment.

"The process of disengagement and de-escalation is virtually stalled at this stage despite umpteen meetings with the Chinese side both at the diplomatic and the military level," sources said.

Established in 2012, the WMCC is an institutional mechanism between India and China for consultation and coordination for maintaining peace and tranquility as well as to exchange views on strengthening communication and cooperation, including between their border security personnel.

# Hindu Munnani to defy govt ban order

Promises to install 1.5 lakh Vinayaka idols

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHENNAI, 19 AUGUST

**W**hile Tamil Nadu's daily case load continue to hover around 6,000, Hindu Munnani, one of the frontline outfits of the Sangh Parivar, decided to defy government ban order and celebrate Ganesh Chathurthi on a large scale.

The Division Bench of Madras High Court, headed by Justice MM Sundareswaran, refused to interfere after two Public Interest Litigations (PIL) sought a direction to restrain the Hindu Munnani, which promised to install 1.5 lakh Vinayaka idols as a mark of protest against the state govern-

ment's decision to impose restrictions on Vinayaka Chaturthi in view of the ongoing pandemic.

Various district collectors are holding meetings to make the Hindu outfit comply with pandemic guidelines.

Meanwhile, the state today reported 5,796 Covid-19 cases, taking the total number of people infected with the virus to 3,55,449. According to the daily health bulletin, 1,186 cases were registered in Chennai in the past 24 hours.

With this, the total number of infections in the metropolis has reached 1,20,267. The bulletin said 116 Covid-19 patients have lost their lives today, taking the fatality rate to 6,123.

## SPB continues to be critical



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
CHENNAI, 19 AUGUST

battling Covid-19.

The popular singer was admitted to the hospital on 5 August after he tested positive for coronavirus and suffered a setback days later, prompting doctors to put him on life support. Veteran Tamil film director and a long-time friend Bharathiraja said the film fraternity would observe a one-minute silent prayer at 6 pm on Thursday and play a song sung by Balasubrahmanyam praying for his speedy recovery.

Music directors Ilayaraja, A R Rahman, actors Rajinikanth, Kamal Haasan and others, besides billions of fans across the globe would sing SPB songs at their respective places.

## TENDER

**THE RAJASTHAN SMALL INDUSTRIES CORPORATION LTD.**  
(A Government of Rajasthan Undertaking)  
Udyog Bhawan, Tisak Marg, C-Ghanta, Jaipur-302 005  
Phone: 0141-2227859, Fax: 0141-2227257  
CIN: U91100RJ1961SC00118

**E-tender BID Invitation Notice**  
**SUPPLY OF TENTS & TARPAULINES**  
UBN-RS12021GLRC00004

RSIC is inviting online competitive BIDS from SSI Units who are registered with Industries Department, Government of Rajasthan for supply of Tent & Tarpaullins to the Government of Rajasthan Departments, PSUs, etc. on rate contract basis for the period of one year. The Tender/Bid shall only be submitted through online tendering system of eproc.rajasthan.gov.in. Last date of submission of tenders is 10-9-2020 till 3.00 PM.  
For further details visit our website: [industries.rajasthan.gov.in/rajsico](http://industries.rajasthan.gov.in/rajsico) sppr.rajasthan.gov.in. For further details contact: Manager (Mktg.) on 0141-2227859  
Managing Director

**EAST DELHI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION**  
(Remunerative Project Cell)

Udyog Sadan, 419, First Floor, Patparganj Industrial Area, Delhi-110092  
No. AQ (R.P. Cell)/EDMC/2020/D-98 Dated : 14.08.2020

**NOTICE INVITING TENDER**

East Delhi Municipal Corporation invites offline bids for surface parking of EDMC area. Date and time schedule is as under :

**Date of release of Tender : 17.08.2020, Pre-bid Meeting : 31.08.2020 (02.30 PM), Date of Placement of Tender Box : 30.09.2020 (09.30 AM), Last date of submission of Bids : 30.09.2020 (11.30 AM), Date of opening of technical Bids : 30.09.2020 (12.05 PM), Date of opening of financial Bids : To be intimated later.**

The tender documents with Map containing detailed terms & conditions and schedule of the tender is available at [www.mcdonline.nic.in/edmcportal](http://www.mcdonline.nic.in/edmcportal). Assistant Commissioner R.O. No. 39/DPI/East/2020-21 R.P. Cell, EDMC

**EDMC's Citizens Helpline No. : 155303**

## e-Procurement Notice INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

1. The Executive Engineer Seraj Division HP.PWD Janjehli Distt. Mandi on behalf of Governor of H.P invites the online bids on item rate, in electronic tendering system, in 2 Cover System for the under mentioned work from the eligible and approved contractors/Firms registered with HPPWD Department.

Sr. No	Name of Work	Estimated Cost	EMD	Cost of Eligible class Tender of Contractor
1	C/O road from Dhunju to Karari Km 0/000 to 2/500 (F/C 5/7 mtr width in Km 0/000 to 0/285 )	29,99,921/-	52,500/-	1500/- Class D-C

2. Availability of Bid Document and mode of submission: The Bid document is available online and bid should be submitted in online mode on website <https://tenders.gov.in>. Bidder would be required to register in the web-Site which is free of cost. For submission of bids, the bidder is required to have Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from one of the authorized Certifying Authorities (CA). Aspiring bidders who have not obtained the user ID and password for participating in e-tendering in HPPWD may obtain the same from the website: <https://htenders.gov.in>. Digital signature is mandatory to participate in the e-tendering. Bidders already possessing the digital signature issued from authorized CAs can use the same in this tender.

3. Key Dates:

1. Date of Online Publication	25.08.2020 11:30 HRS
2. Document Download Start and End Date	25.08.2020 11:30 HRS upto 11.09.2020 09:00 HRS
3. Bid Submission Start and End Date	25.08.2020 11:30 HRS upto 11.09.2020 09:00 HRS
4. Physical Submission of EMD Cost of Tender Document and original technical document	11.09.2020, 10:30 HRS
5. Date of Technical Bid opening; Evaluation of Technical Bid followed by Opening of Financial Bid.	11.09.2020 11:00 HRS

4. TENDER DETAILS:

The Tender Documents shall be uploaded online in 2 Cover:

- i) Cover 1: shall contain scanned copies of all "Technical Documents/ Eligibility Information".
- ii) Cover 2: shall contain "BOQ/Financial Bid", where contractor will quote his offer for each item.

5. SUBMISSION OF ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS: The bidders are required to submit (a) original demand draft towards the cost of bid document and (b) original bid security/Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) and other Technical Documents in/o Executive Engineer Seraj Division HP.PWD Janjehli Distt. Mandi as specified in Key dates Sr. No. 4 on Tender Opening Date, failing which the bids will be declared non-responsive.

6. BID OPENING DETAILS: The bids shall be opened on 11.09.2020 at 11:00 HRS in the office Executive Engineer Seraj Division HP.PWD Janjehli Distt. Mandi H.P by the authorised officer. In their interest the tenders are advised to be present along with original documents at the time of opening of tenders. If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids as specified, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.

7. The bids for the work shall remain valid for acceptance for a period not less than 120 days after the deadline date for bid submission.

8. The Bidder are advised to quote rates inclusive of GST as applicable. GST shall not be paid extra.

9. Other details can be seen in the bidding documents. The officer inviting tender shall not be liable for any delays due to system failure beyond its control. Even though the system will attempt to notify the bidders of any bid updates, the Employer shall not be liable for any information not received by the bidder. It is the bidders' responsibility to verify the website for the latest information related to the tender.

Executive Engineer Seraj Division HP.PWD Janjehli Distt. Mandi H.P

2310/2020-2021 HIM SUCHNA AVAM JAN SAMPAK

## NOTICE INVITING TENDER HP.PWD KANGRA

Sealed item rate tenders on form 6 & 8 are invited by the Executive Engineer, Kangra Division, HP: PWD, Kangra on behalf of the Governor of Himachal Pradesh from the approved and eligible contractors/firms enlisted in HPPWD in the appropriate class for the work mentioned below on 10-09-2020 up to 10-45 A.M. and will be opened on the same day at 11-00 A.M. in the presence of intending contractors or their authorized representatives. The tender forms can be obtained from his office on cash payment (non refundable) on any working day from 07-9-2020 to 09-9-2020. The applications for issue of tender forms will be received latest by 07-9-2020 up to 12:00 Noon. The applications for issue of tender forms accompanied with enlistment letter/or renewal letter and the earnest money in the shape of National Saving Certificates/Saving Account/Time deposit Account in any of the Post Office in Himachal Pradesh duly pledged in favour of Executive Engineer, Kangra Division, HPPWD, Kangra.

The conditional tenders and the tenders received without earnest money will summarily be rejected. The offer of the tender shall be kept open for 120 days.

**Work No.1:-** A/R & M/O General Pool Accommodation Housing Board Colony at Kangra (SH: - Providing and laying interlocking tiles flooring and P/F Painting etc in Type-II quarter) (Deposit work) Estimated cost: Rs. 449146/- Earnest Money Rs. 9000/- Time Limit Three Month Cost of tender 350/-.

**Work No.2:-** A/R & M/O to Residential Buildings Type-I = 2 Nos. and Type-II = 02 Nos. at PWD Colony at Kangra (SH: - Repair of CGI Sheets roofing/Prepared sheets, flooring, painting, wood work and other repair etc.) Estimated cost: Rs. 491199/- Earnest Money Rs. 9850/- Time Limit Three Month Cost of tender 350/-.

**Work No.3:-** C/O Mini Sectt. Building at Kangra (SH: - Balance work of P/I interlocking tiles flooring and other civil item etc.) Estimated cost: Rs. 499902/- Earnest Money Rs. 10000/- Time Limit Two Month Cost of tender 350/-.

**Work No.4:-** C/O Additional Accommodation of Science Block (Model-C) at Govt. Sr. Sec. School Lunj (SH: - Balance work of Civil items i.e. door, window frame and shutter etc.) Estimated cost: Rs. 495970/- Earnest Money Rs. 10000/- Time Limit Two Month Cost of tender 350/-.

**Work No.5:-** C/O Additional Accommodation of Science Block (Model-C) at Govt. Sr. Sec. School Lunj (SH: - Balance work of Civil items i.e. tiles flooring etc.) Estimated cost: Rs. 498975/- Earnest Money Rs. 10000/- Time Limit Two Month Cost of tender 350/-.

**Work No.6:-** C/O link road from Daka to bandla Harizan Basti km.0/0 to 3/100 (SH: - C/O Retaining wall at RD.2/830 to 2/860, km.2/900 to 2/915 & p/2/940 to 2/950) Estimated cost: Rs. 498872/- Earnest Money Rs. 10000/- Time Limit Three Month Cost of tender 350/-.

**Work No.7:-** C/O link road from Daka to Bandla Harizan Basti km.0/0 to 3/100 (SH: - C/O Breast wall at RD.2/660 to 2/860, 2/820 & 2/825 to 2/840 and C/O road side drain in different reaches between km.2/500 to 3/100) Estimated cost: Rs. 497378/- Earnest Money Rs. 10000/- Time Limit Three Month Cost of tender 350/-.

**Work No.8:-** AMP for the year 2020-21 on Link road to Village Nataher (SH: - P/L Cement Concrete pavement in km.0/715 to 0/880) Estimated cost: Rs. 499262/- Earnest Money Rs. 10000/- Time Limit One Month Cost of tender 350/-.

**Work No.9:-** C/O Vet. Dispensary at Salal (SH: - C/O Boundary wall and approach road) (Deposit Head) Estimated cost: Rs. 343588/- Earnest Money Rs. 6900/- Time Limit Three Month Cost of tender 350/-.

**Work No.10:-** C/O Govt. Sr. Sec. School Salal, Distt. Kangra (HP) (SH: - C/O Badminton Court, C/O Path, C/O Toilet Block i/c WS & SI and C/O Septic Tank) Estimated cost: Rs. 336132/- Earnest Money Rs. 6750/- Time Limit Four Month Cost of tender 350/-.

**Work No.11:-** C/O Govt. Polytechnic at Kangra (SH: - Repair of workshop) (Deposit) Estimated cost: Rs. 498800/- Earnest Money Rs. 10000/- Time Limit Three Month Cost of tender 350/-.

**Work No.12:-** A/R & M/O various roads under Kangra Sub Division (SH: - P/L Delinator, cat eye etc.) Estimated cost: Rs. 499800/- Earnest Money Rs. 10000/- Time Limit Two Month Cost of tender 350/-.

**Work No.13:-** A/R & M/O various roads under Shaphur Sub Division (SH: - P/L Patch work in various reaches) Estimated cost: Rs. 499880/- Earnest Money Rs. 10000/- Time Limit One Month Cost of tender 350/-.

**Work No.14:-** A/R & M/O various roads under Gaggal Sub Division (SH: - P/L patch work in various reaches) Estimated cost: Rs. 499900/- Earnest Money Rs. 10000/- Time Limit One Month Cost of tender 350/-.

**TERMS & CONDITIONS:-**

1. The contractors/firms should be registered as or/dealer under GST Act 2017.
2. The intending contractors/firms shall have to produce the copy of latest enlistment and renewal enlisted in HPPWD.
3. The contractors is required to submit an affidavit for not having more than two works in hand in the shape of affidavit duly attested by the competent authority.
4. If any of the date mentioned above happened to be Gazetted Holiday the same shall be processed on next working day.
5. The contractor should quoted the rates of all the items in the tender both in figures and in words failing which tender is likely to be rejected.
6. The copy of Employees Provident Funds (EPF Number) should be attached with the application.
7. Minimum one similar work done of amount not less than 40% (forty percent) of the estimated cost (without Liquidated Damage or compensation) in last five years).
8. The Earnest Money for the above works should be required at the time of sale of tender forms.
9. All the required document should be submitted with the application otherwise single application may be rejected.
10. The Executive Engineer reserves the right to accept/reject any tender/application or all tenders without assigning any reason.

Executive Engineer, HPPWD, Division Kangra  
Distt. Kangra (H.P.).  
(On behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh)

2310/2020-2021 HIM SUCHNA AVAM JAN SAMPAK

## RAIN WHISPERERS



People driving in heavy rain at Sector 8 in Chandigarh on Wednesday.

PARDEEP SAINI

## HP govt seeks to conserve state's cultural heritage

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 19 AUGUST

Himachal Pradesh Language, Art and Culture Minister Govind Singh Thakur on Wednesday said the state government was committed towards conservation and preservation of the rich cultural heritage of the state.

Thakur said over Rs 15 crore has been contributed by various temples of the state towards COVID-19 fund and the department had organised various activities online through 'Him Kriti Karykram', keeping in view the COVID-19 situation.

After the review meeting of Language, Art and Culture department, he directed the officers to work towards providing international identity to language, art, culture and folk culture of the state.

"The culture of various districts that were on the verge of extinction should be revived under Guru-Shishya tradition for which training would be imparted to the youths of the state and efforts would be made to provide employment to them," he added.

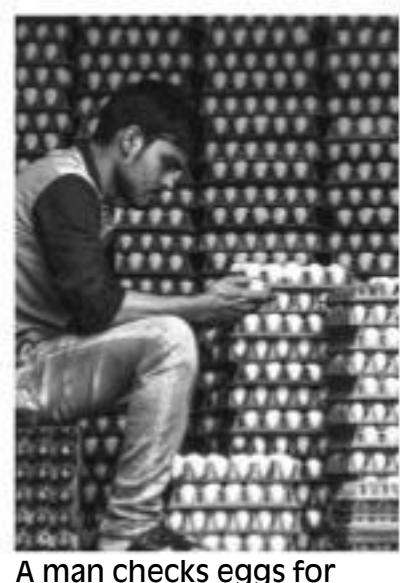
He said the department would develop the heritage villages of the state from tourism point of view. Construction of unauthorised and multi-storey buildings near temple premises would be stopped.

Nav Grah Vatika would be developed in the premises of temples which would be maintained by respective temple trust and people of the village, he said, adding the department was also conserving the historical forts of the state.

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A man checks eggs for breakage as he arranges them for delivery in Munibon on Wednesday.

**Assam covid cases:** Covid-19 casualty increases to 203 and Assam recorded 82,201 individuals with coronavirus infection till Wednesday afternoon. Meanwhile, the state has returned to near normalcy as public transport services start operating with 50 per cent capacity.

**TMC recruits new members:** Sandeep Bhalotia, president Raniganj Chambers of Commerce today joined TMC. Dr Badal Arshu Ghata, a doctor from Egra, and two folk artists Kartik Chandra Das Baul and Lakshman Das Baul joined the party at Trinamul Bhawan in Kolkata on Wednesday. SNS

# This is victory of justice: Nitish on SSR

Opp leader Tejashwi Yadav attacks chief minister for taking 40 days to act on demand for CBI probe made by him

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
PATNA, 19 AUGUST

**H**ours after the Supreme Court approved the CBI probe into actor Sushant Singh Rajput's suicide case, a mad race has begun among the political parties in Bihar to take credit for this probe ahead of the upcoming Assembly elections slated for October/November. From chief minister Nitish Kumar and his ally LJP president Chirag Paswan to Opposition leader Tejashwi Yadav, all claimed that happened because of them.

"This is the victory of justice," the chief minister told newsmen today adding with the CBI probe people could trust there would be justice. The chief minister then turned to Twitter to highlight how his government was right in recommending a CBI probe into the case. "The SC verdict makes it clear that the probe by the Bihar police after a for-



mal case registered by Sushant Singh Rajput's father in Patna and the state government's move to hand over the case to the CBI were legally correct and proper," the chief minister said.

Bihar Opposition leader

## AT A GLANCE

Following is the chronology of events in Sushant Singh Rajput's death case in which the Supreme Court on Wednesday upheld the Bihar government's recommendation to transfer the case to the CBI

14 JUNE Rajput, 34, found hanging from the ceiling of his apartment in suburban Bandra in Mumbai. Mumbai Police starts inquiry process under CrPC to ascertain the cause of unnatural death.

18 JUNE Rajput's girlfriend and actress Rhea Chakraborty records her statement before Mumbai Police.

6 JULY Filmmaker Sanjay Leela Bhansali records statement in the case.

8 JULY : Filmmaker and Yash Raj Films chairman Aditya Chopra records his statement with Mumbai Police.

25 JULY Rajput's father KK Singh lodges FIR in Patna for several offences including abetment of suicide against Rhea and her family members.

27 JULY Mumbai Police

records filmmaker Mahesh Bhatt's statement.

29 JULY Rhea moves SC seeking transfer of the FIR in Patna to Mumbai.

31 JULY ED says it has filed a money laundering case in the matter.

4 AUGUST Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar says the state government has recommended CBI investigation in the matter. Mumbai Police Commissioner says 54 persons in all have recorded their statements in the case.

6 AUGUST CBI says it has lodged an FIR in the case.

after Chirag talked to the former over the issue to give justice to the actor," LJP workers said today.

Political experts cite entirely different reasons for mad scrambles among the political outfits to take credit for the CBI probe. According to them, the dead actor had huge fans following across various castes and communities who loved his acting skills and the political leaders apparently wanted to cash in on his tragic end by projecting themselves as the well-wishers of the Sushant family.

The second point, experts add, is the social background of the actor who comes from a powerful Rajput caste which accounts for a significant 6.5 percent of the total 19 percent population of forward caste voters in Bihar—enough to swing the poll outcome in any one's favour. The other upper castes, such as Bhumihar and Brahmins, constitute 5.5 percent population each while Kayastha's vote share is 1.5 percent only.

Birla attends virtual global conclave of Speakers

NEW DELHI, 19 AUGUST

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla today attended the inauguration of the fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament (WCS), which is being organised in a virtual mode jointly by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Geneva, and the Parliament of Austria on 19 and 20 August under the aegis of the United Nations (UN).

Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, this is the first time that an international parliamentary conference of such a magnitude is being organised in virtual mode. The second part of this conference will be held next year in physical mode in Vienna, Austria.

Lok Sabha MPs, Rajiv Pratap Rudy and Meenakshi Lekhi, and Lok Sabha secretary general Snehlata Shrivastava will also be attending the conference.

The theme of the WCS is "Parliamentary leadership for more effective multilateralism that delivers peace and sustainable development for the people and planet". The Lok Sabha Speaker will express his views during a panel discussion on the theme "Improving governance by bridging the gap between Parliaments and the People" tomorrow. An outcome document highlighting the solidarity of all Parliaments of the world amidst the crisis of Covid-19 pandemic will be adopted at the end of the conference.

SNS

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## Navy prepared to meet any challenge: Rajnath

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 19 AUGUST

Amid the ongoing military stand-off with China at eastern Ladakh, defence minister Rajnath Singh today expressed full confidence in the Indian Navy's preparedness to meet any challenges through a proactive response in deploying its ships and aircraft.

Addressing the annual Naval Commanders' Conference, he hailed the achievements of the Indian Navy, particularly in recent months to deal with coronavirus pandemic.

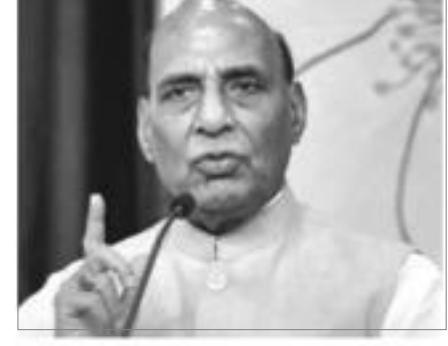
"I congratulate the Indian Navy on the conduct of the biggest ever evacuation exercise 'Operation Samudra Setu', which has contributed extensively to the national interest after the outbreak of the pandemic," Singh said.

He noted that the Indian Navy was instrumental in bringing home almost 4000 people from neighbouring countries based in the Indian Ocean region.

The minister also appreciated the Indian Navy for effectively carrying out mission-based deployment at sensitive locations to protect India's maritime interests. These deployments have helped increase maritime domain awareness, provided rapid humanitarian aid and relief.

Speaking on the dynamic changes taking place in the armed forces, Singh highlighted the creation of the post of chief of defence staff and the department of military affairs as major milestones in bringing more synergy amongst the three services, especially in training, procurement and staffing and bringing jointness in operations.

Speaking on the Indian Navy's proven commitment towards 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'



in consonance with the 'Make in India' initiative of the government, he appreciated that the Indian Navy has been at the forefront of the indigenisation process.

The three-day conference, attended by Indian Navy chief, Admiral Karambir Singh and other top Naval officials, will review the force's operational preparedness and deliberate upon the course to be steered in the future.

The conference is the apex level event for interaction between the top naval commanders.

The conference assumes significance as it comes against the backdrop of recent events on the northern borders, coupled with the unprecedented challenges posed by Covid-19 and would provide the higher naval leadership a forum to discuss conduct of operations, sustenance and maintenance of assets, procurement issues, infrastructure development, human resource management, etc within the ambit of the new normal established by the pandemic", the Navy said.

As this is the first Naval Commanders' Conference since the institution of the Department of Military Affairs (DMA) and the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), the conference would discuss ways to optimise a joint planning structures, tri-service synergy, and operational readiness, as also functional reorganisation within the navy to improve efficiency.

## TMC, BJP spar over Visva Bharati incident

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, 19 AUGUST

The Trinamul and BJP leaders have locked horns over the VBU in incident with each blaming the other for deviating from the values of Rabindranath Tagore.

The BJP state president and MP Dilip Ghosh today alleged that "anti-socials" were appointed by the TMC to carry out the vandalism at Visva Bharati University.

The BJP MP Soumitra Khan other senior leaders today were arrested during the procession from state BJP headquarters to Jorasanko Thakurbari demanding CBI inquiry into incident of the demolition of the Poush Mela ground gate and wall.

The state BJP will also launch movement and threatened to surround all police stations next week, demanding to restore democracy in the

He argued that Visva Bharati authorities' decision to put up boundary wall and fencing on ground is against the ideology of Tagore who advocated for open university.

state.

"This is a matter of grave concern as state government stood as mute spectator on this huge incident at the heritage site."

This is unprecedented. Huge law and order trouble broke out there and there were unlawful gatherings, which was organised by TMC MLA and councillors openly," Ghosh said.

Meanwhile, TMC secretary general Partha Chatterjee today slammed the BJP for politicising the Visva Bharati issue.

He said democracy is maintained in West Bengal and that is the reason the Opposition especially BJP is creating trouble during pandemic.

He argued that Visva Bharati

authorities' decision to put up boundary wall and fencing on ground is against the ideology of Tagore who advocated for open university.

case in April against Maulana Saad and others after it took cognisance of a Delhi Police complaint against these entities.

The Delhi Police crime

branch had on March 31 lodged an FIR against seven people, including the cleric, on a complaint by the station house officer (SHO) of Nizamuddin police station for holding a congregation of Tablighi Jamaat followers in alleged violation of the orders against large gatherings to contain the spread of coronavirus.

Maulana Saad was alleged

to have organised the religious gathering in March at Nizamuddin Markaz in violation of social distancing protocol imposed by the Centre

## Assam media forum bats for MCI to curb ethical violations

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
GUWAHATI, 19 AUGUST

Expressing serious concern over various negative developments over digital media entities functioning across the country, an Assam-based

scribe's forum called upon the existing Press Council as Media Council of India (MCI).

Such a measure would bring news channels and digital media entities under the purview of an upgraded and empowered watchdog body.

Presently, only newspapers and periodicals are under the purview of the Press Council of India, which is but a quasi-judicial body in need of more powers to curb ethical violations," said the Journalists' Forum Assam (JFA).

The forum warned that unless there is a comprehensive set of guidelines covering electronic media

and digital platform along with the print, transgressions might continue which would only put media persons at risk of official strong-arm action.

In various recent worrisome developments, a number of individuals involved with news portals/ digital channels have been arrested by the police in Assam on suspicion of their roles in unethical journalism and petty crimes.

These arrested individuals were allegedly pretending to be scribes.

"There are possibilities that anti-national elements may use the digital media space which would emerge as a hidden menace to the nation's security," commented the forum in a statement adding that around 200 digital news outlets are functioning in Assam alone and the number would be in tens of thousands for the whole country.

## MP CM's announcement comes under scrutiny

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
Bhopal, 19 AUGUST

Madhya Pradesh chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan's announcement on Tuesday that jobs in MP state government would now be given only to students of MP has come under fire and scrutiny, with senior advocate and Congress leader also said that 100 per cent reservation is not allowed.

He pointed out that if all states followed this dictum, it would kill India's spirit of federalism. He said if the decision were implemented, there would be no nurses from Kerala in MP.

Tankha also claimed that about one crore people of MP were also either studying or working in other states.

The CM had also said that the government would make necessary statutory provisions for providing government jobs of the state to students of MP only.

## Tablighi Jamaat: ED conducts multi-city raids

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 19 AUGUST

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Wednesday conducted multi-city searches in connection with a money laundering case filed against Tablighi Jamaat leader Maulana Saad Kandhavi, trusts linked to the Jamaat and others, officials said.

They said various premises in Mumbai, Delhi, Hyderabad and a few other locations are being raided to collect evidence.

The action is being carried out under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), the ED said.

The central probe agency had filed a money laundering

case in April against Maulana Saad and others after it took cognisance of a Delhi Police complaint against these entities.

The Delhi Police crime branch had on March 31 lodged an FIR against seven people, including the cleric, on a complaint by the station house officer (SHO) of Nizamuddin police station for holding a congregation of Tablighi Jamaat followers in alleged violation of the orders against large gatherings to contain the spread of coronavirus.

Maulana Saad was alleged

to be exercising self-quarantine after several hundreds who visited the congregation at Nizamuddin Markaz tested positive for COVID-19.

The police FIR registered against the Tablighi Jamaat

event said Delhi Police contacted authorities of Nizamuddin Markaz on March 21 and reminded them of the government order, which prohibited any political or religious gathering of more than 50 people.

Certain donations received by the Islamic organisation from foreign and domestic sources are also under the scanner of the agency.

In an audio message released after the Delhi Police case, Maulana Saad had said he was exercising self-quarantine after several hundreds who visited the congregation at Nizamuddin Markaz tested positive for COVID-19.

More than 25,500 Tablighi

members and their contacts have been quarantined in the country after the Centre and the state governments con-

ducted a "mega operation" to identify them, the government had said.

At least 9,000 people participated in the religious congregation in Nizamuddin. Later, many of these travelled to various parts of the country.

Some of the foreign nationals who participated in the congregation have been recently allowed to walk free and return to their countries by local courts on payment of varying fines, after they accepted mild charges under the plea bargain process.

However, a number of them could not fly back to their countries due to the pending of some other police FIRs lodged against them for the same offence.

## 7,433 bunkers built in 5 border districts of Jammu

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, 19 AUGUST

Amid indiscriminate mortar shelling by Pakistani troops almost every day in the civilian areas along the International Border (IB) and the Line of Control (LOC) in the five districts of the Jammu division, the government has so far built 7,433 bunkers for safety of the people.

Residents of the three districts, Jammu, Samba and Kathua, along the IB with Pakistan and Rajouri and Poonch along the LOC with the Pakistan occupied Jammu & Kashmir (PoJK) are facing the brunt of Pakistan's shelling.

Several men, women and

children have been killed or wounded during the past few months due to the shelling.

Among the completed bunkers, 6521 are individual bunkers and 912 community bunkers.

Divisional Commissioner, Jammu, Sanjeev Verma on Wednesday in a meeting reviewed the progress on construction of bunkers along the border and other related issues.

Giving progress on bunkers in their respective districts, it was informed that 1522 bunkers have been completed in district Samba, 1098 in district Jammu, 1427 in district Kathua, 2483 in district Rajouri and 911 in district

Poonch.

Remaining bunkers were at different stages of construction.

Of the total 1320 bunkers

(1200 individual and 120 community) in Jammu district 1098 bunkers (994 individual & 104 community) have been completed till date, while in Poonch of the total 1188 bunkers (500 individual, 688 community) 903 bunkers (408 individual, 495 community) have been completed so far.

The Divisional Commissioner directed the concerned officers for close monitoring of construction of bunkers.

He also directed the executing agencies to expedite the pace of work for timely completion of construction of individual and community bunkers.

## Youth power

The beguiling prospect of youth uniting across national borders to further a commitment to democratic ideals appears to be coming true in a swathe of east and south-east Asia. As protests in support of democracy rock two commercial hubs in the region ~ Hong Kong and Bangkok ~ youth from the two places and in Taipei appeared to have come together in what they call a Milk Tea Alliance, a light-hearted reference to a shared love for sweet tea in the three places. The alliance's demand for democracy has manifested itself in Bangkok's young protesters holding flags in support of Hong Kong and Taiwan, while many in Taipei have come out in support of democracy in Thailand and against China's aggression in the region. While the hashtag #MilkTeaAlliance was born in April to protest Chinese nationalist attacks on a Thai celebrity for remarks deemed offensive, it has grown into what one of the organisers of the protests calls a pan-Asian alliance for democracy. Prominent Hong Kong activist Joshua Wong, who faces charges for his role in protests, told a wire agency that the alliance would propel "more students to push forward global solidarity which might confront hardline crackdown." Reports suggest that the hashtag has drawn interest from even beyond the three areas where protests have been public. Youth from India, embroiled in a border dispute with China, and the Philippines, which rejects China's claims in the South China Sea, also seem to have joined. While not every trending hashtag on social media translates into concerted action ~ essentially because of rapidly shifting youth interests ~ the Milk Tea Alliance may well be different because the fault lines in these parts of Asia run deep. With Thai youth now taking their protest into territories hitherto considered taboo ~ including the country's monarchy ~ and the Hong Kong protests being fanned from time to time by Beijing's heavy-handedness, an informal alliance in cyberspace might well morph into a phenomenon that regimes administered by people of an older generation may not fully appreciate. Certainly, China's rulers have thus far been dismissive of the protests saying there is nothing unusual ~ or worrisome ~ about such collusion.

The onset of the Covid-19 epidemic has resulted in greater authoritarianism around the world, with democratic principles being made a casualty. But if a day dawns when a shared desire for democracy unites people from say Belarus to Hong Kong, or from Bangkok to Moscow, the world's despots might find they have problems on their plate. The Middle East has already seen the impacts of youth unrest, and Israel today sees young people taking to the streets against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. A shared love for democratic rights is not the only provocation. As Covid-19 destroys economies and leads to increased joblessness, the frustrations of young people are growing. The inability of global leaders to deal effectively with climate change creates another area of discord in which the young have the greatest stakes.

## A dream in tatters

Even as Pakistan's army chief, General Qamar Javed Bajwa, embarked on a desperate mission to Riyadh to mend ties with Saudi Arabia in the wake of Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi's verbal transgressions, the Imran Khan government this week marked two years in office with the Prime Minister claiming he was locked in a struggle to make his country a welfare state and the Opposition terming his reign an "unmitigated disaster." Certainly, Mr Khan's term in office has provided adequate ammunition to his detractors, although the un-chastened Mr Qureshi seemed ~ even after his threat to Saudi Arabia on calling an OIC meeting backfired badly ~ to blame "eternal enemy" India for most of the country's woes. The criticisms voiced by the two main Opposition parties ~ the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) and the Pakistan Peoples' Party ~ merit consideration for there can be little cavil with the allegations that the country today is mired in debt and largely isolated in the international arena. The ballooning inflation that grips the country ~ the PPP has referred to it as a tsunami unleashed on the people ~ and the massive loss of face and revenue caused to the national airline after a federal minister accused it of rostering unlicensed pilots are disasters that certainly cannot be blamed on an enemy, eternal or new. A spokesperson of the PML(N) said, "The point of economic disaster, poverty and hunger this government has brought the people to in the last two years does not have an example in history. They started with a 90-day plan then a 100-day plan, then a year and now two years have been completed and not even one promise or commitment has been fulfilled. The present government is still lying about each promise and taking U-turns on each commitment." A tracker maintained by a prominent newspaper on its website shows that of the 51 promises Mr Khan made as part of his "Naya Pakistan" initiative, only one has thus far been fulfilled and five have been partly fulfilled. On the other hand, GDP growth has stuttered, unemployment has risen sharply and prominent cities such as Karachi have witnessed mismanagement on a massive scale.

Mr Khan though appeared to justify his stewardship by claiming in an interview given on the occasion that the last two years were spent in trying to understand the challenges Pakistan faced and in trying to "change its path towards what it was originally made for, a welfare state." He blamed his country's woes on the elite who he said had captured most privileges, a prescription that may well be valid considering that Pakistan's elite largely comprises the military but about which Mr Khan can do little. While charges and counter-charges are par for the course, about one fact there can be little disagreement ~ 73 years after its birth, the Pakistan of Jinnah's dreams lies in tatters.

# Kashmir 2020 ~ I

**Outbreak of militancy in Kashmir in the aftermath of the killing of Burhan Wani in July 2016, was preceded by the malaise that plagued Kashmir's politics for years ~ lack of good governance and mismanagement of financial resources; there was also support ~ diplomatic, moral and material ~ from Pakistan. The situation was fast moving out of control with almost daily killing of young militants**



**O**n 5 August 2019 Indians were witness to another 'surgical strike', launched not by India's defence forces, but by the Home Minister on Jammu and Kashmir that in one fell swoop divested it of its statehood and bifurcated it. This was done with extraordinary 'diplomatic' skill, first by passing resolutions in the two Houses of Parliament for abrogation of Article 370 (and Article 35A) of the Constitution and then bifurcating the former state into two Union Territories (UTs) ~ Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, through the passage of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Bill and securing the President's consent in the shortest possible time. The legality of this action may be questioned, but since the matter is now under consideration of the Supreme Court, a discussion on the issue is not intended here.

The principal reasons offered by the government for abrogation of Article 370 (and Article 35A) were: (i) restoration of peace in Jammu and Kashmir by putting an end to militancy, and infiltration across the LoC from Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK), (ii) ending rule by the 'dynastic and corrupt political elite' and, (iii) acceleration of economic development of the State. Have these goals been achieved? If not, this question needs answers.

Outbreak of militancy in Kashmir in the aftermath of the killing of Burhan Wani in July 2016, was preceded by the malaise that plagued Kashmir's politics for years ~ lack of good governance and mismanagement of financial resources; there was also support ~ diplomatic, moral and material ~ from Pakistan. The situation was fast moving out of control with almost daily killing of young militants. This had been paralleled by a sharp deterioration in India-Pakistan relations.

The BJP-led NDA government in New Delhi seemed to be clueless about how militancy could be brought under control. It was keen to curb Kashmir's autonomy by abolishing Articles 370 and 35A of the Constitution that sought to guarantee Kashmir's internal autonomy and gave the power to the State Assembly (under Article 35A) to define who would be J&K's permanent residents.

Only 'permanent residents' would be able to enjoy the privilege of participating in local elections and would be able to own land and other immovable prop-

erties, seek employment in government services, and secure admission to State-funded institutions of higher education. Article 35A stood in the way of Kashmir's economic development, Home Minister Amit Shah told parliament, although many such 'special' rights are guaranteed to tribal populations in Himachal Pradesh and Assam, and in the Northeastern states of Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland and Sikkim under various sections of Article 371 of the Constitution. If these States could enjoy such privileges, what was wrong with Jammu and Kashmir doing so? There were of course some unjust and undemocratic laws prevalent in Kashmir framed by the State legislature under the authority given to it by Article 35A ~ like denial of benefits of permanent resident status to Kashmiri girls married to non-Kashmiris, or the denial of Permanent Resident Certificate (PRC) to the Valmikis who were brought to Jammu and Kashmir in 1957. As a result, they were denied the opportunity of upward social mobility and virtually condemned to be 'sweepers' to work under the Jammu Municipality, the Home Minister told parliament. Denial of PRC to the Valmikis resulting in loss of opportunities was, no doubt, bad; but truth to tell, even in 2020, position of Dalits in Gujarat and elsewhere is no better than that of Valmikis (Dalits) in J&K, despite all the rights guaranteed to them under the Constitution.

But revocation of Kashmir's special status, by itself, could hardly be a solution for controlling militancy. The first and foremost thing should have been to begin a dialogue with all stakeholders including stone-pelting youths, as had been suggested by Lt. General Hooda with long experience of serving in Kashmir. Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee did not hesitate to do this as was pointed out by Mehooba Mufti, the former Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir. Economic development and creation of employment opportunities, along with good governance, would go a long way in reducing militancy. But to succeed in this endeavour, peoples' trust had to be

won.

Instead of taking measures to reduce the trust-deficit, the Union government decided to 'integrate' Jammu and Kashmir with the rest of India by abolishing its internal 'autonomy'. The decision to revoke Article 370 was taken at a time when Kashmir was under President's rule and there was no question of ascertaining people's wishes, as the Governor's concurrence with the decision to abrogate Article 370 could not reflect the wish of the people.

The decision to abrogate Article 370 had long been on the agenda of the BJP; it was also mentioned in its 2019 Election Manifesto. Preparations had been in the making since the appointment of Satya Pal Malik ~ an active political leader and a member of the BJP ~ as the Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, succeeding NN Vohra, in August 2018. The return of the BJP ~ and the NDA ~ to power in May 2019 with an absolute majority, provided the spur to act at a time when the Opposition was in disarray.

Revocation of Article 370 and the government's decision to shut down the State to prevent civil unrest, snap all telephone and internet connections, ostensibly for security reasons, and arrest/detain thousands of people ~ separatists, leaders of mainstream political parties, including three former Chief Ministers, political activists, intellectuals and others ~ came as a shock to Kashmiris.

Absence of any official clarification from the government about the number of people arrested ~ more than 10,000, according to some reports ~ only helped the spread of rumours. To ensure 'peace' in the State, 8,000 additional CRPF personnel were deployed just before the revocation, taking the total number of security personnel deployed in the Valley to more than 75,000, making it 'one trooper for every 100 citizens', according to one commentator.

The government's action stunned Kashmiris. For most of them the situation had never been as depressing and hopeless as it became in the aftermath of the revocation of J&K's special status, and this has only served to widen

the chasm between the people of Kashmir and the rest of India.

Article 370 gave them at least a fig-leaf of autonomy, which was more symbolic than real, because prior to August 2019, out of the 97 subjects in the Central list, the laws passed by Parliament on as many as 94 items, were applicable to Jammu and Kashmir and out of 47 subjects in the Concurrent List, the laws passed by Parliament on 26 subjects were extended to J&K. Kashmiris feel that the revocation of Article 370, the bifurcation of the State into two UTs (albeit with the promise of restoring full statehood to J&K, once normalcy returns) and the decision to increase the number of seats in the new uni-cameral legislature of the UT, set up under the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, from 87 in the previous Assembly (including 4 seats from Ladakh, 46 from the Kashmir Valley and 37 from Jammu), to 104, and ultimately to 114 after the delimitation exercise is completed, will further disempower them both ethnically and politically. These apprehensions are not entirely baseless.

The Union government's security-oriented approach did not succeed in the past in dealing with the problems being faced by Kashmiris, on the contrary it was spurring militancy; nor will it succeed in future unless judicious steps are taken for amelioration of peoples grievances. For example, at least 45 youths joined the ranks of militants in Kashmir during January-May 2018 including an MBA and a Ph.D scholar. According to security officials, every funeral of a local militant spawned at least two additional militants. It became almost a bottomless pit. It is difficult to explain the reason for the sudden spurt in the growth of militancy. But as an Army officer explained, it could be the growing influence of pan-Islamisation and religious indoctrination 'in which unemployment emerges as a catalytic agent for a quick reaction to pick up a gun'.

This drift towards the hardcore pan-Islamic ideology, some observers feel, will make the task of controlling militancy that much more difficult, especially in the context of a recent UN report highlighting the presence of between 150-200 members from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Myanmar affiliated to the Al-Qaida increasing India's security concerns.

(To be Concluded)



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

## Addressing issues before court

**SIR,** While concluding your editorial 'Dignity Restored?' (August 18), you have said that "Respect and dignity of the judiciary ought not be demanded from citizens on the threat of criminal contempt. It should be earned."

It would be foolish on my part to contradict your point, which I safely avoid. But I would like to comment that the apex court would not have been so aggressive, had Mr Prashant Bhushan abstained himself from scandalising the court publicly. Instead he ought to have ventilated his grievances through the established mode of lodging a complaint against the "misconduct" or "bad conduct" of any judge.

Being a senior member of the bar, his attempt to by-

pass the law should not draw any sympathy from the legal fraternity. Because his offence was complete in the true legal sense, it warranted action under the provisions of law.

A plethora of judgments can be cited in support of action taken by the apex court. But the legal fra-

ternity are up in their arms to compel the apex court to address the 'corruption' issues raised by Mr Bhushan, which remain unattended.

There is no denying that both law points and facts are involved in the matter, which I think, are all related to make an indepth in-

quiry into the alleged corruption inevitable.

Yours, etc., Arun Gupta,  
Kolkata, 18 August.

### TRAM SERVICES

**SIR,** North and Central Kolkata's main mode of transportation had been tram services operating between Shyambazar to Dharmatala. Unfortunately, tram services on this route have been stopped since the lockdown began.

Epecially for school goers and for senior citizens, tram services are the most convenient way of traveling between these two parts of town. Many residents of these areas can avoid crowded buses and go to Dharmatala and Dalhousie. The sooner services resume, the better it will be for passengers.

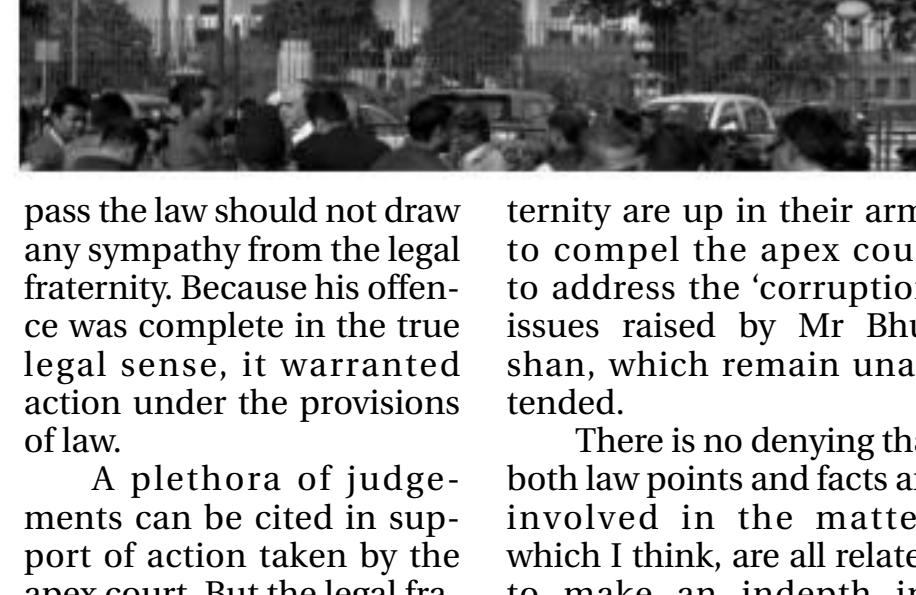
Yours, etc., Ratan Chakraborty,  
Kolkata, August 18.

### MAN OF MASSES

**SIR,** This is to compliment Joydev Jana for the excellent article, 'Bapu's India' (13 August) that dwells on Gandhiji's contribution to the development and prosperity of the country. Mahatma Gandhi, one of the greatest leaders of the anti-imperialist Indian freedom movement, represented India in many fields during the first half of the twentieth century. He was also an exceptional revolutionary bent on obliterating all sorts of injustice and inequality from society. He dreamt of India's advancement through the principles of truth, love, non-violence and fellowship. He was never an individualist. He was for the masses.

Thus, Nehru wrote, "And then came Gandhi. He was like a powerful current of fresh air that made us stretch ourselves and take deep breaths, like a beam of light that pierced the darkness and removed the scales from our eyes, like a whirlwind that upsets many things, but most of all the working of people's mind. He didn't descend from the top, he seemed to emerge from millions of India, speaking their language and incessantly drawing attention to them and their peasants and workers." Gandhiji, more a man of the people, almost the embodiment of Indian peasants, represented other basic aspects of the ancient Hindu tradition as well as renunciation and asceticism.

Yours, etc., Narayan Chandra Ghosh,  
Nadia, 18 August.



## Democracy, cops and violence

**T**he US has evinced a keen interest in promoting ethnic reconciliation and national integration in Sri Lanka and never misses an opportunity to offer advice to the governments here. It also generously funds some local NGOs that promote democratic ideals. Issuing a statement on the outcome of the recently-concluded general election, the US has urged the newly elected government to renew its commitments to building an inclusive economic recovery and uphold human rights and the rule of law. Some pro-government elements have taken exception to this unsolicited advice, as evident from their social media posts, but there is nothing wrong with it. Sri Lankan governments and politicians should be kept reminded of the need to uphold democracy, which they are allergic to, but shouldn't the US put its own house in order first?

Social integration eludes the US, which pontificates to others, as can be seen from the Black Lives Matter movement, which has been the African Americans' response to racially motivated brutal police attacks on the member of their community. Their long-standing grievances have also found expression in their protest campaign, which has rippled out to some other countries as well. Perhaps, it was only in Sri Lanka that the police set upon a group that took part in a Black Lives Matter protest. America's failure to achieve national integration fully and the attendant issues seem to have led to a serious problem.

Homicide rates in some large US cities such as New York, Philadelphia and Chicago have increased by double-digit percentages amidst police officers resigning and retiring across

## The Island

**T**he country, Newsweek reports. The beginning of the rise in crimes coincided with the death of George Floyd at the hands of a group of police officers, on 25 May, Newsweek says. The diminished police legitimacy, following the killing of Floyd, is thought to be one of the reasons for the increase in the crime rate.

The murder of Floyd led to a resurgence of the Black rights campaign and calls, in the US, for deep fund cuts for the police force and downsizing it. These measures have been adopted in US states, making many police officers quit or opt for premature retirement. The Seattle city council recently voted for reducing the police force by 100 officers and decreasing the salaries of its high-ranking officers.

Seattle Police Chief Carmen Best has resigned in protest. Fund cuts have reportedly affected the New York Police Department as well. It has had to cancel a recruitment drive and is experiencing a high retirement rate. A decrease in the number of police officers leads to an increase in the crime rate anywhere in the world. This situation would not have arisen if the US had practised what it preaches to others and achieved national integration and social cohesion.

One can only hope that the Sri Lankan police will learn from what has befallen their US counterparts and mend their ways. Their legitimacy is also diminishing rapidly. They have become a mere appendage of the ruling party and earned notoriety for their selective efficiency and brutality. Unless urgent action is taken to straighten up the Police Department, the day may not be far off when the people take to the streets, calling for fund cuts or even the abolition of it, as in the US. It has now been revealed that the Police Narcotic Bureau was the biggest distributor of dangerous drugs in the country.

M RIAZ HASAN

For over two decades prior to my retirement, I worked as an independent consultant to five different agencies of the United Nations: Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Food Programme (WFP), International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the World Bank (WB). It was a unique experience. I did some 100 consultancies in 35 countries during this period and over half of them were for FAO. My consultancy work was mainly in water resources, irrigation and rural development, although I was drafted for project identification, investigation, preparation and completion missions also. These consultancies lasted from one week to three months. The longest consultancy (3 months) was in the South Pacific Island of Fiji also known as the 'Paradise of the South Pacific' - where my main brief was to assess the erosion rate of this relatively (geologically) young island with an annual rainfall of over 2000mm.

I was recruited for my first consultancy from an international British consulting firm where I was working for over a decade. I continued working as a consultant for FAO for the next two or three assignments through the same consulting firm until I resigned and became an independent consultant. This was a risky step which I was prepared to take to enhance my experience and increase my income. I was extremely lucky because the consultancy work kept coming.

My next three consultancies for FAO were in South Yemen which included hydrological investigation of the biggest wadi (transitory river) in South Yemen. Then I moved to the Investment Centre of the FAO which is an important division of the FAO and works in close union with the World Bank (WB). In collaboration with WB, it mounts identification, investigation, preparation and other missions mainly to water resources and irrigation projects in Africa, Asia and South America. I did several such missions to Africa (Zimbabwe, Morocco) and Asia (India, China, Sri Lanka). In India I participated in a major and unique WB-FAO project which aimed at collecting, validating, computerizing all hydrological data (rainfall, climate, river flow, water quality and groundwater), and establishing State, Regional and Central

## Recollections of a UN consultant



Water Data Centres in fifteen peninsular and other States in two phases over a 10-year period. No other country in the world has such water data availability or accessibility.

In 1989 I was invited by the FAO to join an UNHCR Inter-Agency mission to Afghanistan to assess the immediate needs of the country following the Russian withdrawal in 1989. The other members of the mission came from UNHCR, UNESCO, WHO and UNDP. The mission leader, Stephen di Mistura of UNHCR, who also represented it on the mission (He now happens to be the UN's Chief Coordinator in Syria). The mission spent a fortnight visiting most of the affected

areas of the country and its final report made somber reading. A British daily summed up the main conclusions of the mission with this headline: 'Conditions in Afghanistan at Russian Withdrawal Worse Than in Vietnam at American Withdrawal'.

After FAO, I did several missions for the World Food Programme

(WFP) in India, China, Egypt, Gambia and Yemen. It is a much smaller agency and its approach to development work is different from that of other agencies. It operates on 'Food for Work' principle and it pays its beneficiaries in kind (food) and not in cash. The food items (grains, oil, sugar, etc) are donated to it by major donors like the USA, Canada, UK and countries in Western Europe. Because of its smaller size, it depends largely on independent consultants to carry out its development work.

My first mission was to the Hebei Province of China where the residents of a water-deficient region had constructed underground tanks to store rainwater under their houses to utilize it in the dry season (water harvesting). My next mission was to India to a major dam project in Karnataka where some 18,000 labourers were working daily. The money WFP made by selling rice etc to the families of labourers at subsidized prices was spent on labour welfare schemes. The mission recommended

construction of toilets, baths, play grounds and meeting places for labourers although the project authorities preferred construction/upgrading of roads.

My consultancy work for IFAD and UNDP was extremely limited and the consultancies I did could be counted on fingers. However, I am puzzled by the fact why there are three different UN agencies - FAO, WFP, IFAD - for food and agriculture and why all three are based in Rome. Whenever the UN reform - about which we hear a lot - is taken up by the USA and other countries that matter, I think WFP and IFAD should be merged with FAO and the size and functions of FAO itself should be reviewed radically.

The FAO has done a magnificent job in the Third World since it was established in Rome over 70 years ago, but some of these countries do not need its technical assistance anymore, for example China, India and Brazil. At present, it seems to run an empire from a building in central

Rome which housed the Ministry of the Empire under Mussolini. Two of its former DGs - one from Lebanon and the other from Senegal - stayed beyond their two mandatory terms of four years each.

Whenever I came to India for consultancy work, my Indian colleagues asked me politely how to get UN/WB consultancy work. I told them that the experience of UN agencies in recruiting Indian consultants/experts - and there are many in India - is extremely bad. UN agencies do not even get replies to their requests for Indian consultants in time. By the time they receive a reply the agency would recruit the expert from another country and proceed on the mission. At present, the UN Agency or its staff members recruit Indian experts they already know by approaching them directly. I urge my Indian colleagues to take up this issue with the government. I think a special unit in the HRD ministry or some other ministry should be established for the recruitment of consultants in various UN agencies including the World Bank. The unit should focus on: a) training of potential consultants in how UN missions operate under strict time limits and preference should be given to those with experience of more than one country, b) training in style and content of UN reports with emphasis on brevity and clarity, and c) willingness to work 24x7 while on any mission. The consultants should preferably be below 65 years and regardless of their position and status in the organization, what matters is the expertise they claim in their chosen field.

The future of the UN and its various political and development agencies is being actively discussed by its members and the public at large. For example, the possible composition of the Security Council to reflect the changed geo-political situation in the world is a topic of many discussions in the media. On the other hand, politicians like President Trump regard the UN as dispensable and think that people go the UN 'to have a good time'. Having been an independent outside consultant/observer of the UN, I tend to agree with that great politician and writer, Winston Churchill: "The UN may not have taken us to heaven but it has saved us from hell".

The writer, an NRI living in London, is a retired UN/World Bank Consultant and author.

**100 YEARS AGO**

### OCCASIONAL NOTE

In the new number, just issued, of the Bengal, Bihar and Orissa Co-Operative Journal there is a very timely note by Sir Devaprasad Sarvadikary on the part which the Co-operative movement is to play in the Reformed regime. He holds that the great bulk of the people will undoubtedly make a "sustained, good, and honest try" to help on the reforms, but he expresses surprise that Co-operation ("with a big C") has not figured prominently in published programmes or speeches. Sanitation, education, industries, temperance, and co-operation should and will long be, in Sir Devaprasad Sarvadikary's opinion, the main planks of all political platforms. We want, as he says, to "build up the people, their resources, and their stability;" and he regrets to find that "higher politics," as they are called, have absorbed much of the attention of future legislators to the detriment and exclusion of the subjects indicated. Co-operation will be one of the transferred subjects. Sir Devaprasad regards it in its various aspects - agricultural, industrial, and distributive - as the great lever of national progress; and, if it be handled properly by the Minister of the future, he looks forward to the achievement of wonders in many directions. It is to be hoped that the lead thus given by Sir Devaprasad Sarvadikary will be zealously followed by all who have appreciated the substantial and direct benefits which Co-operation secures for the people.

**NEWS ITEMS**

### BOMBAY'S ROSY FUTURE

Bombay is on the eve of very great developments which will change it from a "city of dearth and death," as the Governor called it in a recent speech, to a city in which all can dwell with comfort. That was the feeling which the Hon. Mr. G.S. Curtis, member-in-Charge of Development, gave in a lecture of fascinating interest which he delivered tonight in Bombay. The lecture was an illustration of the new policy of the Bombay Government, which now courts publicity and seeks the cooperation of the public. It was a striking exposition of many ambitious schemes, which will be carried out by the Government of Bombay, in conjunction with the Municipality, the Improvement Trust, and Mr. Curtis gave a vision of the time when many new areas will have been opened out.

### PIR MAHBUB SHAH

Karachi, Aug 19  
Pir Mahbub Shah was released from the Hyderabad Jail yesterday morning in accordance with a writ issued by the Bombay Government. He drove out with two men to Fuleli, probably to catch the launch for Tando, but subsequently was seen in town in Stern Kutch, where his brother is living. On the way 50 to 100 people followed him crying "Allah Ho Akbar." No Khilafatist cared to go near him, Khilafatists and Extremists are angry that the Pir has apologised. When the Pir first came to the jail some illiterate people started several stories about his miraculous powers and his doings. The stories were taken up with at least some modified approval even by certain educated people. Now, however, these are all quiet.

### KING EDWARD MEMORIAL IN DACCA

Dacca, Aug 19  
This morning in the presence of a large gathering of the people of Dacca and of Eastern Bengal, his Excellency the Governor opened the memorial to King Edward the VII. When the late King died Dacca was the capital of the province of Eastern Bengal and Assam, and in a public meeting presided over by the then Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Lancelot Flare, it was resolved to raise money for a permanent memorial. The Maharaja of Mymensingh came forward with a munificent contribution of one lakh of rupees and, thanks to the generosity of other well-known residents of Eastern Bengal, a sum of close upon five lakhs of rupees was subsequently raised. It was decided that two memorials should be erected, one in Shillong and the other in Dacca.

## Coalescence of authoritarianism



MAHIR ALI

The foreign ministers of Israel and the UAE openly exchanged phone calls last week. It was more a case of 'hear my ring' than 'wear my ring', but the engagement has nonetheless publicly been formalised, and a marriage made in Washington is on the cards.

Perhaps it should not have come as a surprise. It was an open secret that the two parties had been flirting for decades. Intelligence links reportedly stretch back as far as the 1970s, but the relationship blossomed into a more meaningful romance more recently,

when the old 'enemy of my enemy is my friend' dynamic acquired greater potency during the Obama administration's overtures to Iran.

Then Donald Trump appeared on the American electoral landscape, and their Israeli links helped both the Saudi crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman (MBS), and his regional mentor Mohammed bin Zayed (MBZ), the crown prince of Abu Dhabi, gain access to the inner circles. Jared Kushner, the president's son-in-law, was an obvious conduit.

All Gulf states have long been loyal allies of the US. And for much of that period their overt hostility to

Israel has been tempered by a covert envy relating not only to the nation's technological prowess and its nuclear capability, but to its privileged status as Uncle Sam's golden child in the Middle East. Apart from being by far the most favoured recipient of American largesse in the region, in the eyes of successive US administrations it could also do no wrong. Particularly egregious excesses earned, at best, a mild and meaningless reprimand.

MBS and MBZ wanted a piece of that, and under Trump — a fellow worshipper of Mammon — they have largely succeeded. It doesn't hurt, from the American point of view, that the

UAE, alongside Saudi Arabia, is among the keenest clients for US military hardware — and both nations' propensity to deploy it against much weaker foes has been amply demonstrated in Yemen for more than half a decade.

Reaching a peace deal in Yemen might indeed have been an achievement for the UAE, five years after it collaborated with the Saudis in an intervention that both naively thought would achieve its objectives within months, if not weeks. Instead, it finds cause for pride in making peace with a nation with which it has never been at war.

Unlike Egypt in 1979 and Jordan 15 years later, the UAE's accommodation with Israel isn't a shift from hostilities to frivolities and fraternisation. Abu Dhabi and Washington have sought to frame Israel's suspension of its declared intent to annex more of the occupied West Bank as a key aspect of the deal. That is sheer nonsense, given that Benjamin Netanyahu's electoral promise has already been on hold pending a green light from the White House, with the Trump administration getting cold feet over the idea of endorsing such an outrageous violation of international law by its pet state.

The song sheets were not coordinated, though. Trump says annexation is off the table. Netanyahu says it definitely is not, but the settlers who live on occupied Palestinian territory aren't convinced. David Friedman, the US ambassador to Israel, says the word 'suspend' was chosen carefully, and it means a 'temporary halt'. It's unlikely the UAE will have any say in if

and when that 'halt' slides to 'go' — but then, the Emirates habitually thrive on fantasies.

When I worked for a newspaper in Dubai from the late 1980s to the mid-1990s, it was forbidden to mention Israel. Every reference had to be changed to 'the Zionist entity'. It went beyond the news media. The word 'Israel' and its derivatives were blacked out in dictionaries, the shape of the nation was obliterated in atlases, and so on.

The absurdity of the rule was plain as day. So was the hypocrisy of it all. Like most other Arab states, the UAE back then paid lip service to the cause of Palestinian self-determination. In that context, perhaps not much has changed. Nor would it be entirely surprising if it turned out that Mohammed Dahlan, a brutal foe of both the Palestinian Authority and Hamas and now a 'security adviser' to MBZ, played a leading role in both the new deal and the 2010 assassination in Dubai of a senior Hamas leader.

On the brighter side, one must acknowledge the diminution of that hypocrisy. For states such as the UAE — with Oman and Bahrain likely to follow, and perhaps even the Saudis if MBS gets his way — it makes far more sense to collaborate with the kindred semi-fascist authoritarian state that Israel has become under Netanyahu than to fake a moral superiority that can fool only imbeciles.

There's no denying, though, that the Middle East dynamic has shifted in the past few days — towards a coalescence of authoritarian impulses, and away from the long-standing pretence of empathy with the -eternally dispossessed Palestinians.

Dawn/ANN.

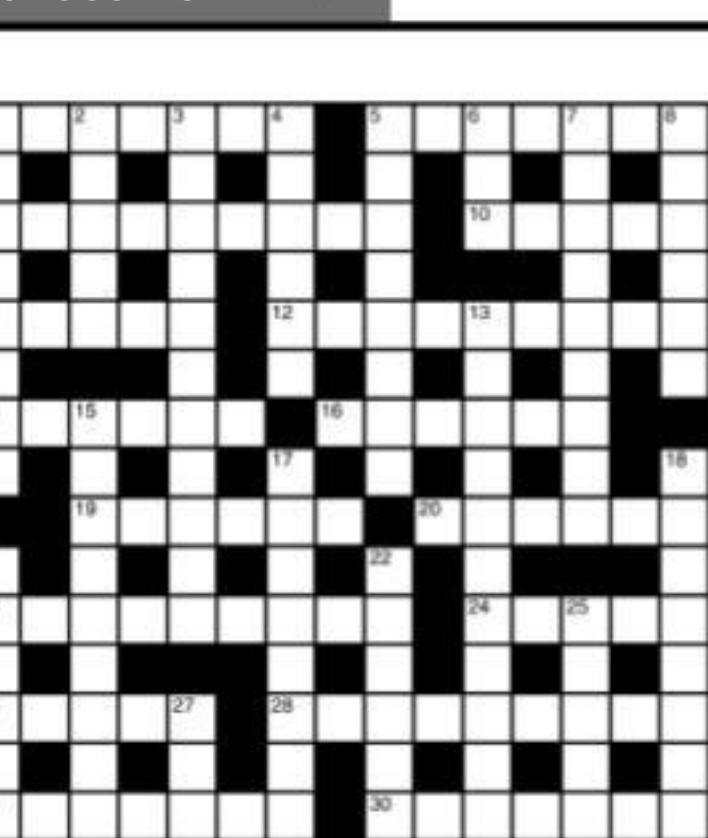
NO 28048

### ACROSS

- 1 Unfortunate lapses following treatment introduced by hospital (7)
- 5 Boundaries of jazz-rock expanded by an outstanding composer (7)
- 9 Desire to get hurt in this way suppressed by male pride briefly (9)
- 10 Took steps to secure ends of electric cable in apartment (5)
- 11 United supporters return, causing chaos as usual (5)
- 12 Bill's partner and childless individual had to pull together (9)
- 14 Pure cocaine's initial rush (6)
- 16 Slow-moving creature is camouflaged in tree (6)

### DOWN

- 19 Merit taken in by trick article in part of The Sun's coverage (6)
- 20 Dish containing rice and capers mainly brought back by the French (6)
- 23 Alarming data leads to hypothesis extrapolating the universe's ultimate fate? (4,5)
- 24 Self-indulgent nurses like mischievous children (5)
- 26 Principles for laying out CPU's integrated circuits? (5)
- 28 Nothing that is right may be worse (9)
- 29 Writer works hard knocking out one play (7)
- 30 Popular woman almost gets to sleep around in relationship (7)
- 1 I'm shocked about missing daughter wanting to see family (8)
- 2 Fare returning at the earliest opportunity with time to board (5)
- 3 Experienced soldiers hit back after losing leader (11)
- 4 Perhaps boy making jokes in school will get cane (6)
- 5 Plane projection frames inverted position in mind's eye to begin with (5,3)
- 6 Pile of exposed photographs? (3)
- 7 Creature that's said to be part dog, part duck (9)
- 8 Humour child with rebellious urge (6)
- 13 The essential piece of
- 15 Reform accepted by both sides under American and Russian settlement (9)
- 17 Sister merrily lowering her head to be awkward (8)
- 18 What developed air resistance filling muddy pond? (8)
- 21 Reduced daily rent for holiday home (6)
- 22 Withdrawn and bored about hangover on vacation (6)
- 25 Priest rejecting expression of doubt about core of his religion (5)
- 27 Queen perhaps delaying introduction of legislation (3)



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

### OFFICIALS AND LABOUR

The report of the Committee appointed by the Government at the instance of Mr. Bhurguri, who moved a resolution on the subject in the Legislative Council in 1918, to enquire into "Rasai, Lapo and Chher" prevailing in Sind, has been published, together with three huge volumes of evidence recorded by the Committee. The report traces at length the origin, survival and expansion of these three systems of receiving of free supply of labour by officials of Sind while on tour. The Committee point out that these three systems lie deep rooted in past traditions; defying all efforts for their suppression. They make various recommendations to stop the evil, including camping grounds, employment of independent subsidised contractors, and substantial increase of travelling allowances of the subordinate and menial establishment.



India expects to sell 1.5 million bales of cotton to Bangladesh to liquidate surplus stocks

PRADEEP KUMAR AGARWAL  
CHAIRMAN, COTTON CORPORATION OF INDIA

## THUMBNAILS

**CBDT chief meets I-T officers:** In a bid to dispel concerns over the new faceless assessment scheme, Central Board of Direct Taxes chairman P C Mody has met income tax field units to appraise them of the new scheme and explained the nitty-gritty of its implementation. A source said that in the meeting, Mody explained the faceless assessment and taxpayers' charter and detailed the reallocation and reorganisation aspects of the department's manpower. PTI

**NPCI subsidiary:** The National Payments Corporation of India on Wednesday announced the launch of a subsidiary for its international growth ambitions. The subsidiary, NPCI International Payments Ltd, will facilitate the body's "ambition" of venturing into newer international markets and co-create payment systems with other nations, as per an official statement. PTI

**SLR Metaliks:** SLR Metaliks Ltd, a leading producer of alloy steel in the country, increased its capacity of manufacturing which has seen a jump during Covid pandemic from 0.3 million tonnes to 0.4 million tonnes annually. "With an investment of about Rs 60-70 crore, we will witness an increase of about 25 per cent in sales in FY 2022. We are also in talks with DRDO to supply them for defence needs. It has truly been an Atmanirbhara phase for a company," said SLR Metaliks Ltd managing director Rajkumar Goel in a Press release statement. SNS

**BMW launch:** BMW Group India has launched new BMW 3 Series Gran Turismo "Shadow Edition". Priced at Rs 42.5 lakh (ex-showroom), the luxury tourer seamlessly unites elements of sports and comfort for customers who look for both adventure and extravagance. SNS

**New insurance plan:** Aditya Birla Sun Life Insurance on Wednesday announced the launch of its new plan ABSLI Assured FlexiSavings Plan. It offers fully guaranteed benefits and allows policyholders an instant access to their money by giving them the flexibility to make unlimited withdrawals from their policy, said a release. SNS

**Realme smartphones:** Smartphone maker realme has launched two new entry-level products ~ realme C12 and realme C15 ~ with 6000mAh batteries. The company also introduced the realme Buds Classic and realme T-shirt, said a Press release from the company. SNS

**TriBeCa-ITD tie-up:** Kolkata-based home healthcare company TriBeCa Care has announced a collaboration with ITD Cementation India Ltd to set up a Covid care facility at New Town for their Covid positive employees, according to a Press release. SNS

# Banks set to restructure up to ₹8.4 lakh crore of loans

Restructuring will help banks' bottomlines as money to be set aside as provisions will be lower: Ind-Ra

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI, 19 AUGUST

**B**anks are likely to restructure up to Rs 8.4 lakh crore of loans, or 7.7 per cent of the overall system's credit, under the newly announced recast package, a domestic ratings agency said today.

Over 60 per cent of this Rs 8.4 lakh crore was susceptible to slip into the non-performing assets (NPAs) category if not for the recast move, and the restructuring will help banks' bottomlines as the money to be set aside as provisions will be lower, India Ratings said.

### STRESSED ASSETS

Unlike the earlier experience post the global financial crisis, where nearly 90 per cent of the restructuring happened in the corporate loans, the non-corporate segment, which includes small businesses, agricultural loans and retail lending, will account for a higher share this time, India Ratings said.

It estimated the total amount of non-corporate loans to be recast at Rs 2.1 lakh crore.

In the corporate loans, the non-corporate segment, which includes small businesses, agricultural loans and retail lending, will account for a higher share this time, the agency said.

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Earlier this month, the Reserve Bank of India had announced a recast package which focused on a case-by-case approach for restructuring rather than a blanket or sectoral approach. The central bank had also allowed small value non-corporate loans to be recast.

Unlike the earlier experience post the global financial crisis, where nearly 90 per cent of the restructuring happened



Within the corporate segment, the restructuring may range from Rs 3.3 lakh crore to Rs 6.3 lakh crore, depending on the strategies the banks adopt, the agency said

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hotels and other consumer discretionary sectors is likely to be restructured, but the largest contribution by quantum will be from infrastructure, power and construction sectors, it said.

In the non-corporate segment, the micro, small and medium enterprises will account for half of the loans which will be restructured, while the rest will be split evenly between agro and retail advances, it said.

Banks will start working on the restructuring as soon as the moratorium gets over by the end of this month and provide money accordingly, the agency said, adding the K V Kamath committee will look at advances of over Rs 1,500 crore and even in the case of large loans, the banks will do the groundwork in advance.

The overall provisions will be lower by 16-17 per cent to 2.3 per cent for the banking system, because restructuring requires banks to set aside only 10 per cent of the loan outstanding as provisions while for NPAs, it is much higher, it added.

A high proportion of debt from real estate, airlines,

go up to Rs 2.1 lakh crore, it said.

Within the corporate segment, the restructuring may range from Rs 3.3 lakh crore to Rs 6.3 lakh crore, depending on the strategies the banks adopt, the agency said, adding the range is so wide because it feels 53 per cent of the pool is at high risk, while 47 percent is at moderate risk.

A high proportion of debt from real estate, airlines,

## Cabinet okays rise in sugarcane price

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 19 AUGUST

The Centre today decided to increase the minimum price sugar mills pay to sugarcane growers by Rs 10 to Rs 285 per quintal for the next marketing year starting October 2020.

The decision to increase the fair and remunerative price (FRP) of sugarcane for the 2020-21 marketing year (October-September) was taken in the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) held yesterday.

The government had fixed sugarcane FRP at Rs 275 per quintal for the current 2019-20 marketing year.

"The CCEA has approved the sugarcane FRP for the 2020-21 at Rs 285 per quintal," information and broad-

casting minister Prakash Javadekar said in a media briefing.

In a statement, the government said the FRP of Rs 285 per quintal has been fixed for a basic recovery rate of 10 per cent.

However, a premium of Rs 2.85 per quintal will be paid by sugar mills for every 0.1 per cent increase above 10 per cent in the recovery, it said.

Also, the government has made a provision for reduction in FRP by Rs 2.85 per quintal for every 0.1 percentage point decrease in recovery, in respect of those mills whose recovery is below 10 per cent but above 9.5 per cent.

However, for mills having recovery of 9.5 per cent or below, the FRP is fixed at Rs 270.75 per quintal.

## World Bank may cut growth forecast

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 19 AUGUST

The World Bank today indicated that it may further lower its growth projections for India and said critical reforms in key areas such as health, labour, land, skills and finance are needed to come out stronger from the Covid-19 crisis.

The World Bank had in May projected that the Indian economy will contract by 3.2 per cent in FY 2020-21 (April 2020 to March 2021) and rebound slowly in the next financial year.

"Further challenges have emerged in recent weeks which are likely to weigh on the prospects in the near term. These risks include the virus continuing to spread; further deterioration in the global outlook; and additional strains projected on the financial sector. Keeping these factors in mind, a steeper con-

traction may be projected in the revised outlook that will be available in October 2020," it said in its India Development Update released today.

It projected India's fiscal deficit to rise to 6.6 per cent of GDP in FY21 and remain elevated at 5.5 per cent in the following year.

"The pandemic has afflicted India at a time when its economy had already been decelerating," the World Bank said.

The pandemic has afflicted India at a time when its economy had already been decelerating," the World Bank said.

The pre-Covid-19 growth deceleration was perceived to be due to long-standing structural rigidities in key input markets; continuing balance sheet stress in the banking and corporate sector, which was compounded more recently by

in 2019-20.

"The outlook has now changed substantially, and the economy will likely contract in the current fiscal

year," it said.

The economic impact of the pandemic will be felt in a direct decline in domestic demand and supply disruptions triggered by the containment measures, resulting in near collapse in certain service activities such as trade, transport, tourism and travel. Also, there would be a second round of consumption and investment slowdown, compounded by (and ultimately driving) distress in the financial sector and financial markets, it said.

"India needs to continue to implement critical reforms in key areas such as health, labour, land, skills and finance to come out stronger from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. These reforms should aim at enhancing the productivity of the Indian economy and spur private investments and exports," the World Bank report said.

## Rel Retail buys majority stake in Netmeds

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
MUMBAI, 19 AUGUST

Reliance Retail has acquired a majority equity stake in online pharma company Netmeds for a cash consideration of approximately Rs 620 crore, Reliance Industries announced Tuesday night.

The strategic investment represents approximately 60 per cent equity share capital of Netmeds' parent company Vitalic and 100 per cent direct equity ownership of its subsidiaries' Tresara Health, Netmeds and Dadha Pharma, according to Reliance Industries.

"This investment is aligned with our commitment to provide digital access for everyone in India," said Ishita Ambani, director of Reliance Retail. "We are impressed by Netmeds' journey to build a nationwide digital franchise.

With quickly expanding Internet and smartphone connectivity, financial consultant Frost & Sullivan estimates the e-pharmacy market in India to reach Rs 25,000 crore (\$3.5 billion) by 2022.

Founded by Pradeep Dadha and Bruce Schwack in 2015, the Internet pharma Netmeds door-delivers prescription medications, health and personal care products to over 20,000 pin codes across India.

## Centre relaxes working capital norm for discoms

SNS & PTI  
NEW DELHI, 19 AUGUST

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, today approved a proposal to give one-time relaxation in working capital limit norm for discoms under the Ujjwal DISCOM Assurance Yojana (UDAY) to get loans as part of the Rs 90,000-crore liquidity infusion scheme.

One-time relaxation will help in providing liquidity to the power sector and ensure payments by discoms, it added.

The Covid-19 outbreak and consequent nationwide lockdown have exacerbated liquidity problems for the power sector. Revenues of the power distribution companies have nosedived as people are unable to pay for the electricity consumed, while power supplies, being an essential service, have been maintained.

Energy consumption has decreased substantially. The liquidity of the power sector is not expected to improve in the short term, as economic activity and power demand will take some time to pick up. There is, thus, an immediate need to infuse liquidity in the power sector, it added.

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman had in May announced the Rs 90,000-crore liquidity infusion into cash-strapped discoms, facing demand slump due to the lockdown to contain Covid-19.

## CCI rejects complaint against WhatsApp

NEW DELHI, 19 AUGUST

The Competition Commission of India has dismissed a complaint of alleged unfair business practices by popular messaging platform WhatsApp with respect to digital payments market in the country.

It was alleged that Facebook-owned WhatsApp has abused its dominance in the "market for Internet-based messaging application through smartphones" to manipulate another market ~ "market for UPI-enabled digital payment applications" in its favour.

In a 41-page order, the CCI said there was no violation of Section 4 of the Competition Act. This section pertains to abuse of dominant position.

To assess the complaint, the watchdog considered two relevant markets ~ "market for over-the-top (OTT) messaging apps through smartphones in India" and "market for UPI (Unified Payment Interface) enabled digital payment apps in India".

According to the regulator, the informant has contended that WhatsApp will leverage its dominance in the upstream market to have a competitive edge over existing competitors.

The informant also seems to be distressed by the fact that while the other existing players spent considerable resources to establish themselves in the UPI-enabled digital payment app market, WhatsApp will get users on its platter without making any efforts, CCI said in the order.

"The apprehensions of the informant, according to Commission, does not really hold much merit. As stated above, the UPI market is quite established with renowned players competing vigorously. In such a market, it seems implausible that WhatsApp will automatically garner a market share merely on account of its pre-installation," it noted. PTI

## Markets maintain momentum for 3rd day

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI, 19 AUGUST

sition of 60 per cent stake in e-pharmacy Netmeds for Rs 620 crore.

Tech Mahindra was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, rising 1.91 per cent, followed by Bharti Airtel, Maruti Suzuki, ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank, SBI, RIL and Asian Paints.

On the other hand, Bajaj Auto, ONGC, Nestle India, HUL and Kotak Bank were among the laggards, slipping up to 1.42 per cent.

According to traders, domestic bourses followed positive cues from global markets after US equities hit record highs in overnight session.

Equity market benchmarks ticked higher for the third straight session today, propped up by Reliance Industries, HDFC Bank and ICICI Bank amid a bullish trend in global equities.

The BSE Sensex touched a high of 38,788.51 points during the day but succumbed to profit booking at the fag-end of the session. It finally closed at 38,614.79 points, up 86.47 points or 0.22 per cent.

According to traders, domestic bourses followed positive cues from global markets after US equities hit record highs in overnight session.

### POSITIVE GLOBAL CUES

► The BSE Sensex touched a high of 38,788.51 points during the day but succumbed to profit booking at the fag-end of the session. It finally closed at 38,614.79 points, up 86.47 points or 0.22 per cent.

► On similar lines, the NSE Nifty rose 23.05 points or 0.20 per cent to finish at 11,408.40 points.

markets, despite US markets surging to record highs. Indian indices also exhibited this volatility before closing the day with a positive bias. Banking index again led the gains.

"The gains in the Indian



► According to traders, domestic bourses followed positive cues from global markets after US equities hit record highs in overnight session.

market, as in the global markets, have been driven by ample liquidity and the expectation of normalisation of business supported by government measures, in a post-Covid-19 scenario. However,

investors must continue to remain stock specific and use the accumulation strategy for the time being," said Vinod Nair, head of research at Geojit Financial Services.

BSE telecom, realty, industrials, basic materials, utilities and finance indices jumped up to 1.49 per cent, while IT, FMCG, healthcare and teck indices ended in the red.

Broader BSE mid-cap and small-cap indices rallied as much as 1.16 per cent.

Persistent foreign fund inflows too buoyed investor sentiment, traders said.

Foreign institutional investors bought equities worth a net Rs 1,134.57 crore on Tuesday, provisional exchange data showed.

Global markets followed

cues from Wall Street despite rising US-China tensions and concerns around stretched valuations.

Bourses in Tokyo and Seoul ended on a positive note, while Shanghai and Hong Kong were in the red.

Stock exchanges in Europe were trading with steady gains in early deals.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude was trading 0.66 per cent lower at \$45.16 per barrel.

In the forex market, the rupee settled 6 paise lower at 74.82 against the US dollar.



*Our policy on Israel is clear: Quaid-i-Azam had said that Pak can never accept state of Israel until the people of Palestine get rights*

PAKISTAN PRIME MINISTER IMRAN KHAN  
REJECTING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL

The Statesman

NEW DELHI, THURSDAY 20 AUGUST 2020

09

# Mali President resigns after military coup

Malian soldiers who forced President Keita to resign promise to organise new elections after their takeover was condemned by the intl community

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
BAMAKO, 19 AUGUST

**M**ali's president announced his resignation late Tuesday, just hours after armed soldiers seized him from his home in a dramatic power grab following months of protests demanding his ouster.

The news of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita's departure was met with jubilation by anti-government demonstrators and alarm by former colonial ruler France, and other allies and foreign nations.

The UN Security Council scheduled a closed meeting Wednesday afternoon to discuss the unfolding situation

in Mali, where the UN has a 15,600-strong peacekeeping mission.

Speaking on national broadcaster ORTM just before midnight, a distressed Keita, wearing a mask amid the pandemic, said his resignation three years before his final term was due to end was effective immediately. A banner across the bottom of the television screen referred to him as the outgoing president.

I wish no blood to be shed to keep me in power, Keita said.

I have decided to step down from office. He also announced that his government and the National Assembly would be dissolved, certain to further the country's turmoil amid an eight-year Islamic insurgency and the growing coronavirus



This video frame grab image obtained by AFP from ORTM (Office de Radiodiffusion-Télévision du Mali) on Wednesday shows Malian military coup leaders, who seized power in Mali, during a press conference. ■ AFP

pandemic. Keita, who was democratically elected in 2013 and reelected five years later, was left with few choices after the mutinous soldiers seized weapons from the armory in

the garrison town of Kati and then advanced on the capital of Bamako. They took Prime Minister Boubou Cisse into custody along with the president. There was no immedi-

ate comment Wednesday from the troops, who hailed from the same military barracks where a coup was launched more than eight years ago, allowing the Islamic insurgency to take hold amid a power vacuum.

The political upheaval unfolded months after disputed legislative elections. And it also came as support for Keita tumbled amid criticism of his government's handling of the insurgency, which has engulfed a country once praised as a model of democracy in the region.

The military has taken a beating over the past year from IS and al-Qaida-linked groups. A wave of particularly deadly attacks in the north in 2019 prompted the gov-

ernment to close its most vulnerable outposts as part of a reorganization aimed at stemming the losses.

Tuesday's developments were condemned by the African Union, the United States, and the regional bloc known as ECOWAS, which had been trying to mediate Mali's political crisis. Former colonizer France and the United Nations, which has maintained a peacekeeping mission in Mali since 2013, also expressed alarm ahead of Keita's speech.

Meanwhile, the Malian soldiers who forced President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita to resign in a coup promised early Wednesday to organise new elections after their takeover was swiftly con-

demned by the international community. In a statement carried overnight on state broadcaster ORTM, the mutinous soldiers who staged Tuesday's military coup identified themselves as the National Committee for the Salvation of the People led by Col. Maj. Ismael Wagu.

With you, standing as one, we can restore this country to its former greatness," Wagu said, announcing that borders were closed and that a curfew was going into effect from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m. The news of

Keita's departure was met with jubilation by anti-government demonstrators in the capital, Bamako, and alarm by former colonial ruler France, and other allies and foreign nations.

## UN crisis looms as US seeks Iran sanctions

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
UNITED NATIONS, 19 AUGUST

**The sanctions had been eased under the 2015 N-deal that Donald Trump withdrew from two years ago.**

Pompeo is set to travel to New York on Thursday to notify the Security Council president that the United States is invoking the snapback mechanism in the council's resolution that endorsed the nuclear deal. It allows participants to demand the restoration of all U.N. sanctions in a complicated procedure that cannot be blocked by a veto.

The State Department is expected to announce Pompeo's travel plans on Wednesday, but he and Trump have made no secret of their intention to invoke snapback, especially since their attempt to extend the arms embargo suffered an embarrassing defeat last Friday. The U.S. won just one other yes vote, with China and Russia opposed and the 11 other members abstaining.

Just like the arms embargo extension, the administration's snapback plan is bitterly opposed by China and Russia as well as the other Security Council members, including US allies Britain and France, and could set the stage for a battle over the legitimacy of the UN's most powerful body.

Former Trump national security adviser John Bolton, no slouch when it comes to anti-Iran positions, has long said that the U.S. lost its snapback standing when it withdrew from the deal and that moving ahead is not worth the damage it could do to U.S. veto power in the council.

restoration of sanctions. The others, which still support the deal, maintain the US lost that standing when Trump pulled out of the accord in 2018, but it isn't clear if they can stop the invocation of snapback through technical procedural means. The US argument is highly controversial. It has been ridiculed by the Chinese, Russians and Europeans, and not even the biggest Iran hawks in the United States all agree with it.

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## UAE-Israel pact followed many years of discrete talks

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
DUBAI, 19 AUGUST



Palestinians shout slogans during a protest against the United Arab Emirates' deal with Israel to normalize relations, in Gaza City, on Wednesday. ■ AFP

fidence in Warsaw, according to officials involved.

That February 2019 meeting, originally conceived as an anti-Iran gathering, morphed into a broader Mideast security endeavor after European objections to its agenda.

Many countries opted not to send their top diplomats,

and Russia, China and the Palestinians skipped it entirely. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu attended, however, as did the foreign ministers of key Arab states.

At the summit, diplomats from Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain spoke of the threat Iran posed to their security and its

use of Shiite proxies in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Yemen.

They stressed that confronting Iran had become the top priority ahead of resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in comments appearing in leaked video, whose authenticity was confirmed by a U.S. official who attended the gathering. Netanyahu followed, echoing similar concerns. Iran was very high on the agenda because Iran's foreign policy is the biggest driver of instability in today's Middle East, the U.S. special envoy for Iran, Brian Hook, told The Associated Press.

Four months after the summit, a secret meeting between the UAE and Israel took place on June 17, 2019, in Washington. The trilateral focused on regional, cyber and maritime security, as well as diplomatic coordination and dis-

rupting terror finance, according to a U.S. official who participated but was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Saudi Arabia cautiously welcomes UAE, Israel normalization: Saudi Arabia's foreign minister cautiously welcomed an agreement between its close ally the UAE and Israel to establish full ties and exchange embassies.

Prince Faisal bin Farhan said the deal, which also halted unilateral annexation by Israel of West Bank territory sought by the Palestinians, could be viewed as positive. Meanwhile, Sudan fired the spokesman for the foreign ministry, a day after he remarked that the African country was looking forward to making a peace deal with Israel.

## Pakistan's TTP splinter groups join hands to disrupt Af peace process

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE  
ISLAMABAD, 19 AUGUST

**Attacks in Kabul, provinces of Afghanistan kill 5: Bomb attacks in Kabul and in northern Afghanistan, as well as an ambush in the country's south killed at least five people on Wednesday, and wounded 15, officials said. Two sticky bombs targeted government employees in the Afghan capital, killing two people, including a police officer, and wounding two others, police said.**

Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), the Pakistani-based terror group, has merged with its splinter groups Jamat-ul-Ahrar (JUA) and Hizb-ul-Ahrar (HuA) in Afghanistan to realign and re-establish itself to carry out terror activities aimed at sabotaging the ongoing peace process in Afghanistan along with targeting neighbouring Pakistan.

Reliable sources have informed that representatives from TTP, JUA and HuA had several meetings in the recent past in different parts of Afghanistan as part of their months long ongoing efforts to merge the splinter groups and discuss their reunification.

As per sources, the talks

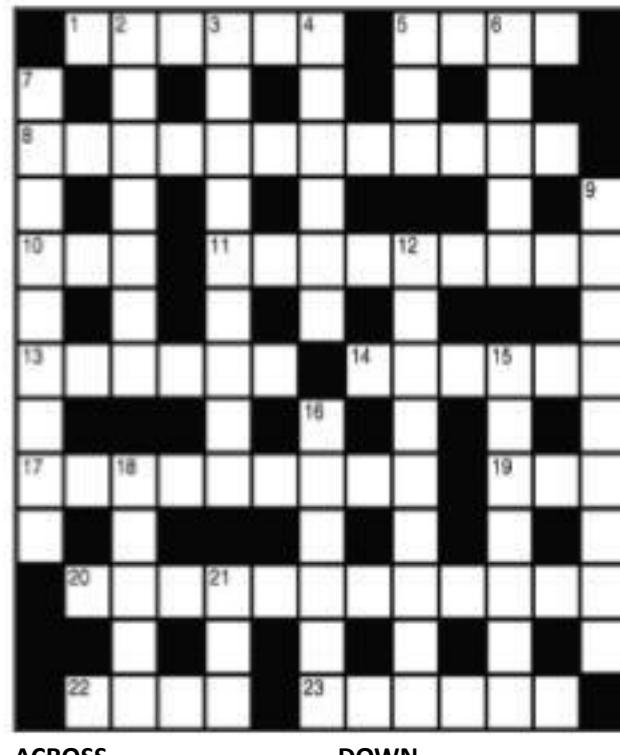
Afghanistan intelligence network, who they say are working hand in glove with India's Research and Analysis Wing (RAW).

As per reliable sources, the ongoing talks ended in a merger that was registered through an oath of allegiance to bring the three militant factions together. The sources also confirmed that the meeting was held in Afghanistan's Paktia and Kunar provinces.

As per the agreement, Mufti Noor Wali has been appointed the chief (amir) of the TTP with the responsibility of carrying out terror activities in Pakistan. On the other hand, JuA's Ikram Turabi, who was bailed out of Peshawar Central Jail earlier this year, is now the head of Amari Shura.

## LEISURE

### 10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



**ACROSS**  
1 Large country (6)  
5 Boxing contest (4)  
8 Sweat (12)  
10 Droop (3)  
11 Esteemed (9)  
13 Set of clothes (6)  
14 Field of activity (6)  
17 For the most part (2,3,4)  
19 Consummation (3)  
20 Office equipment item (5,7)  
22 Heavy metal (4)  
23 Quick (6)

**DOWN**  
2 Erect (7)  
3 Overseer (9)  
4 Anew (6)  
5 Flying mammal (3)  
6 German submarine (1-4)  
7 Fitful (9)  
9 Risky undertaking (9)  
12 Costly (9)  
15 Voted in (7)  
16 University grounds (6)  
18 Vestige (5)  
21 Conclusion (3)

**SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD**

**ACROSS**  
1 Dire, 13 Salver, 14 Director, 17 Remise, 18 Tundra, 20 Date, 21 Opus, 22 Lascivious,  
3 Rear, 14 Doubloon, 15 Flea, 16 Feat, 19 Tip, 6 Asti,

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

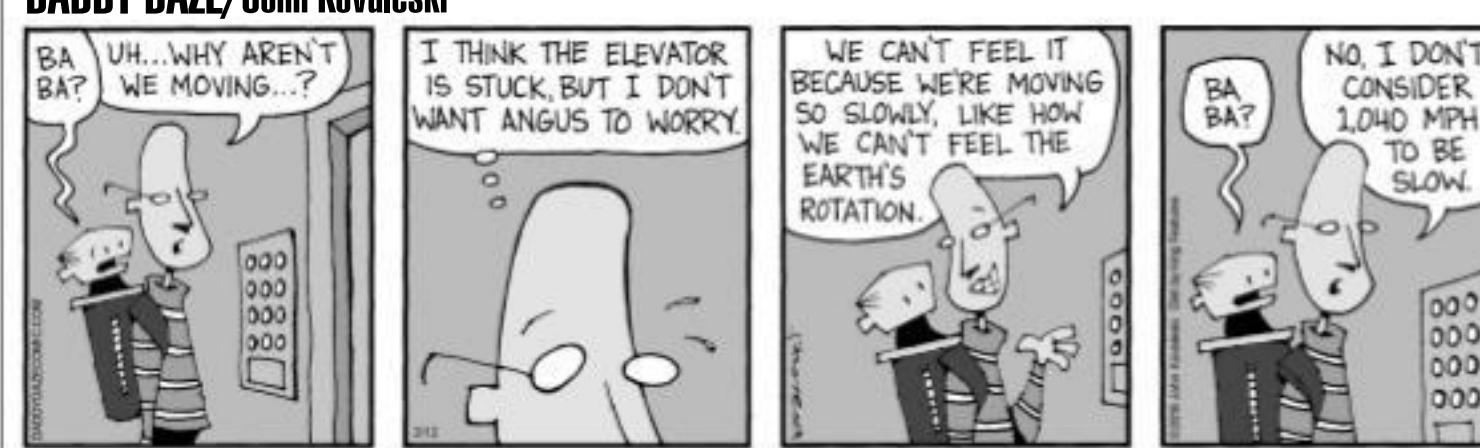
### BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker



### RED EYE/Bill Yates & Mel Casson



### DADDY DAZE/John Kovaleski



### NEED TO KNOW

#### HOSPITALS

• AIIMS 26588500, 26588900  
• Moolchand Medcity (formerly Hospital) 42000000 & 24-hour Chemist Shop 42000447  
• Vidysagar Institute for Mental Health and Neuro-Sciences 26924300, 26924304  
• Batra Hospital & Medical Research Centre 29051280, 29958747  
• Deen Dayal Upadhyay 25496320, 25494403  
• Guru Tegh Bahadur 23717473, 23253230

#### RAILWAY INQUIRY

General Inquiry 139  
• Toll Free Nos. 1800112511 & SMS Inquiry Nos. 57886, 54959, 5676747

#### ROADWAYS INQUIRY

• ISBT (General Inquiry): 23868836, 23865181

• AIR INDIA Flight Inquiry and Reservation 415281407

• INDIGO AIRLINES New Delhi City Office 43513185, Call Center 09910383383, 18001803838, Reservation 43513186; Indigo Airlines Air

#### 22586262, 22585007

#### port 011-25671580; Terminal I 23860626

• Rajasthan Roadways 25671579, 18001803838

• JET AIRWAYS Flight Inquiry and Reservation 38481111

• EMIRATES Flight Inquiry and Reservation 33773377

• Air Canada Flight Inquiry and Reservation 41528181

• Air France Flight Inquiry and Reservation 23466262 (City)

25652294 (Airport)

• Kuwait Airways Flight Inquiry and Reservation 23354373

#### SCRABBLE® BRAND



#### PAR SCORE 175-185

by JUDD

FIVE RACK TOTAL

TIME LIMIT: 25 MIN

SCRABBLE®

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YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION BY JUDD

RACK 1 = 20

RACK 2 = 59

RACK 3 = 86

RACK 4 = 15

JUDD'S TOTAL = 184

PAIR SCORE 115-125

PAR SCORE 175-185

BY DAVE GREEN

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SCRABBLE®

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

### SUDOKU

#### Conceptis Sudoku

Difficulty Level ★★★

Answer to previous puzzle

3x3 box contains the same number. The difficulty level increases through the week.

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with 3x3 boxes. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that no row, column and no 3x3 box contains the same number. The difficulty level increases through the week.

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</div



*The pandemic has laid bare the difficult situation of the poor and the great inequality that reigns in the world*

POPE FRANCIS

## WEATHER

CITY	MAX	MIN
SINGAPORE	29°C	25°C H
HONG KONG	26°C	20°C H
TOKYO	27°C	19°C CL
LONDON	19°C	08°C R
DUBAI	30°C	25°C S
SAN FRANCISCO	13°C	04°C C H
NEW YORK	17°C	09°C C H
MOSCOW	21°C	11°C S

S=sunny, CL=clear, H=hazy, R=rainy...

## THUMBNAILS



Spanish King Felipe VI and Queen Letizia at Puig des Molins Monographic Museum in Ibiza, on Wednesday. AFP

**Heathrow Airport unveils new Covid-19 test plan:** The UK's Heathrow Airport, one of the world's busiest hub airports, on Wednesday unveiled a new coronavirus testing facility which it hopes will help cut down the compulsory 14-day quarantine period currently required for travellers into the UK from most countries. AP

**Quakes in West Indonesia:** Two powerful and shallow undersea earthquakes shook western Indonesia on Wednesday, causing panic but no immediate reports of casualties or damage. The US Geological Survey said the magnitude 6.8 earthquake occurred at a depth of 10 kilometres under the sea. AP

**Typhoon Higos hits China:** Typhoon Higos made landfall on China's southern coast on Wednesday, bringing high winds and rain as it weakened to a tropical storm. The typhoon came ashore at Zhuhai, with maximum sustained winds of 126 km per hour, China's National Meteorological Center said. AP

**NZ reports 5 new virus cases amid record testing**

WELLINGTON, 19 AUGUST

New Zealand appears to be gaining control over a coronavirus outbreak in Auckland after just five new community infections were reported Wednesday amid record levels of testing and contact tracing. A sixth infection was found in a quarantined traveler who had returned from Qatar.

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern says 500 more military personnel would be deployed to quarantine hotels as the nation looks to reduce the number of private security guards it employs and tighten its border controls.

Health authorities have still not figured out how the outbreak began after the country went 102 days without the virus spreading in the community. Last week authorities put the nation's largest city into a two-week lockdown. AP

## Trump campaign's Russia contacts 'grave' threat, Senate says

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
WASHINGTON, 19 AUGUST

The Trump campaign's interactions with Russian intelligence services during the 2016 presidential election posed a grave counterintelligence threat, a Senate panel concluded Tuesday as it detailed how associates of Donald Trump had regular contact with Russians and expected to benefit from the Kremlin's help.

The nearly 1,000-page report, the fifth and final one from the Republican-led Senate intelligence committee on the Russia investigation, details how Russia launched an aggressive effort to inter-

fere in the election on Trump's behalf. It says the Trump campaign chairman had regular contact with a Russian intelligence officer and says other Trump associates were eager to exploit the Kremlin's aid, particularly by maximising the impact of the disclosure of Democratic emails hacked by Russian intelligence officers.

The report is the culmination of a bipartisan probe that produced what the committee called the most comprehensive description to date of Russia's activities and the threat they posed.

The investigation spanned more than three years as the panel's leaders said they wanted to thoroughly document the

**The report is the culmination of a bipartisan probe that produced what the committee called the most comprehensive description to date of Russia's activities and the threat they posed.**

repudiate the Republican president's claims that the FBI had no basis to investigate whether his campaign was conspiring with Russia.

Trump, who has repeatedly called the Russia investigation a hoax, said Tuesday he didn't know anything about the report, or Russia or Ukraine.

"All I know is that I have nothing to do with either one of them and that came out loud and clear in the report," Trump said.

The findings, including unflinching characterizations of lucrative interactions between Trump associates and Russian operatives, echo to a large degree those of special counsel Robert Mueller's Russia investigation and appear to

unprecedented attack on U.S. elections.

While Mueller's was a criminal probe, the Senate investigation was a counterintelligence effort with the aim of ensuring that such interference wouldn't happen again.

The report issued several recommendations on that

front, including that the FBI should do more to protect presidential campaigns from foreign interference.

The report was released as two other Senate committees, the Judiciary and Homeland Security panels, conduct their own reviews of the Russia probe with an eye toward uncovering what they say was Manafort's misconduct in the early days of the investigation.

A prosecutor appointed by Attorney General William Barr, who regards the Russia investigation with skepticism, disclosed his first criminal charge Friday against a former FBI lawyer who plans to plead guilty to altering a government email.

Kilimnik may have been connected to Russia's effort to hack and leak Democratic emails, though that information is redacted.

The report also says two pieces of information raise the possibility of Manafort's potential connection to those operations, but what follows is again blacked out.

Both men were charged in Mueller's investigation, but neither was accused of any tie to the hacking. A Manafort lawyer, Kevin Downing, said Tuesday that information sealed at the request of Mueller's team completely refutes whatever the intelligence committee is trying to surmise.

## Biden nominated to take on Trump

Trump would be formally nominated by the GOP as its presidential candidate at its virtual convention next week



US Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden reacting next to wife Jill Biden after being formally nominated as the Democratic presidential candidate on a video feed at its hosting site in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on Wednesday. AFP

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
WASHINGTON, 19 AUGUST

**D**emocrats have officially named Joe Biden as their presidential candidate after several elder statesmen lauded the former US vice president's leadership skills to challenge incumbent Republican President Donald Trump in November.

Two Democratic former presidents, Bill Clinton and Jimmy Carter, and former secretary of state John Kerry endorsed Biden on Tuesday, the second day of the Democratic National Convention (DNC). Former secretary of state Colin Powell, a Republican, also backed Biden's candidacy.

Biden, 77, became the Democratic Party's nominee for the November 3 presidential election on Tuesday night in a pre-recorded roll call vote from delegates in all 50 states. He said the nomination "means the world to me and my family, and I'll see you on Thursday," referring to his speech accepting the nomination on the final night of the four-day convention which is largely virtual, amid the coronavirus pandemic.

It is the honour of my life to accept the Democratic Party's nomination for President of the United States of America, Biden said in a tweet later.

Biden's wife, Jill, who made a strong pitch for him, said that if elected, her husband would bring to the White House "leadership worthy of our nation" at the time of an unprecedented coronavirus pandemic and economic depression. There are those who want to tell us that our country is hopelessly divided,

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## Biden and Harris are spineless, careerpoliticians: Trump campaign

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
WASHINGTON, 19 AUGUST

US President Donald Trump's campaign has called Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden and his Indian-origin running mate Kamala Harris the two most spineless, career politicians ever, and that their candidature indicated the formal takeover of the Democratic Party by the radical left.

Biden, 77, and Harris, 55, will challenge President Trump and Vice President Mike Pence in the November 3 presidential polls. Biden was

that our differences are irreconcilable. But that's not what we've seen over these months, she said. We have shown that the heart of this nation still beats with kindness and courage. That's the soul of America Joe Biden is fighting for now, she said. We just need leadership worthy of our nation

worthy of you, she said in her speech from inside the classroom of the Brandywine High School, in Delaware where she once taught English in the 1990s. Biden played an important role in the Congressional passage of the 2008 US-India civil nuclear deal and was a

key player in strengthening bilateral ties during the eight years of Obama administration. Last week, he scripted history by nominating Indian-origin Senator Kamala Harris as his running mate. After a spectacular roll call that showed the heart and soul of our nation, it's official. Congratulations, Joe Biden, Harris said in a tweet.

While Biden is scheduled to deliver his acceptance speech on Thursday, Harris, 55, will deliver it on Wednesday. Biden is leading over Trump by 7.7 points nationally, according to the average of polls by Real Clear Politics.

This is a few points drop from his previous lead of 10.2 points he held in June. Trump, would be formally nominated by the Republican Party as its presidential candidate at its virtual convention next week.

Earlier, former president Bill Clinton said the convention that Biden helped bring the country back from a recession before, and he can do it again. Joe Biden is committed to building America back again, he said. "Donald Trump says we're leading the world," he said, noting that the US was the only major industrial economy to have its unemployment rate triple.

Indian-American Senator Kamala Harris will be Biden's running mate.

Clinton said a presidential election is the world's most important job interview and this year the election is a tall order given that the Covid outbreak has killed over 170,000 people and destroyed millions of jobs and small businesses. AP

For Trump, US Presidency means spending hours watching TV: Bill Clinton

WASHINGTON, 19 AUGUST

Former US president Bill Clinton has launched a scathing attack on Donald Trump, saying the Oval Office under him is a chaotic storm centre instead of

of being a "command centre" and for him the presidency is about spending hours a day watching TV and zapping people on social media and not taking responsibility for his actions.

Donald Trump says we're leading the world. Well, we are the only major industrial economy to have its unemployment rate triple," Clinton said in his address to the 2nd day of the 2020 Democratic National Convention that formally nominated former vice president Joe Biden as the party's presidential candidate.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi is pushing ahead with Saturday's vote to prevent election-year mail changes and provide emergency postal funds. I don't, frankly, trust the postmaster general, Pelosi said.

Trump has flatly denied he is seeking to slow down the mail, even as he leveled fresh assaults on mail-in voting and universal ballots. AP

## SHINING STAR



Spasskaya tower is seen through the Kremlin wall in Moscow on Wednesday. AFP

Associated Press  
NOVO PROGRESSO (BRAZIL), 19 AUGUST

A year ago this month, the forest around the town of Novo Progresso erupted into flames the first major blazes in the Brazilian Amazon's dry season that ultimately saw more than 100,000 fires and spurred global outrage against the government's inability or unwillingness to protect the rainforest.

This year, President Jair Bolsonaro pledged to control the burning typically started by local farmers to clear land for cattle or to grow soybeans, one of Brazil's top exports. He imposed a four-month ban on most fires and sent in the army to prevent and battle blazes. But this week the smoke

blazes are pushing the world's largest rainforest toward a tipping point, after which it will cease to generate enough rainfall to sustain itself, and approximately two-thirds of the forest will begin an irreversible, decades-long decline into tropical savanna. But residents of Novo Progresso like businessman Claudio Herculano believe the city has only grown in the last few years because of increased ranching in the area.

It pains anyone to breathe this air, Herculano, 68, said this week. I have a little house uphill, and I do worry a bit that it could be destroyed. But all the people here are looking for better days, and we know what drives this economy.

Bolsonaro is sending mixed signals: He greenlit an army-

led operation to fight Amazon destruction in May, but then this month he denied the region's trees can catch fire. Speaking at a video summit about the Amazon with fellow South American leaders, he also touted a year-on-year decrease in July deforestation data, omitting the fact it was still the third-highest reading for any month since 2015.

This story that the Amazon is burning is a lie, he claimed, even as smoke from more than 1,100 fires wafted over the region that day. On Monday and Tuesday of this week, reporters from The AP did not see a single soldier in or around Novo Progresso. And this year could see more fires than last, according to Paulo Barreto, a forest engineer at environmental group Imazon.

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Portland protesters set fire to county govt building

PORTLAND, 19 AUGUST

Protesters in Portland broke out the windows of a county government building, sprayed lighter fluid inside and set a fire in demonstration that started Tuesday night and ended Wednesday morning with clashes with police, officials said.

The fire at the Multnomah Building damaged the county government's office of community involvement, where Oregon's first gay marriage took place and where protective gear has been distributed to try to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, said Multnomah County Chair Deborah Kafoury.

This is the heart of our County, where people in our community come to get married, get their passports, and celebrate their cultural traditions and diversity, she said in a statement. Demonstrations that often turn violent have gripped Oregon's biggest city for more than two months following the police killing of George Floyd.

Participants have repeatedly broken into the offices of a police union headquarters building miles and last month clashed for weeks with federal agents dispatched to protect a US courthouse targeted by protesters.

Portland officers late Tuesday declared a riot outside the county building after demonstrators started fires in dumpsters, used rocks to smash first floor windows and tossed burning material inside that set the fire that set off fire alarms and the building's sprinkler system, police said. AP

EU leaders seek to ramp up pressure on Belarus Prez

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
BRUSSELS, 19 AUGUST

European Union leaders are putting on a show of support Wednesday for people protesting in Belarus. Emergency talks will aim to highlight their concern about the contested presidential election and ratchet up pressure on officials linked to the security crackdown that followed.

The EU believes that the results of the 9 August polls, which handed President Alexander Lukashenko his sixth term have been falsified

gram on Belarus that was eased four years ago as relations with Lukashenko improved.

In a video statement ahead of their summit, Belarusian opposition leader Svetlana Tikhonovskaya called on Europe to support the awakening of Belarus. I call on you not to recognize these fraudulent elections. Mr. Lukashenko has lost all the legitimacy in the eyes of our nation and the world, Tikhonovskaya said.

On the eve of the meeting, Michel had a half-hour telephone conversation with President Vladimir Putin to share the EU's concern about election irregularities and the scale of the security crackdown, and to impress upon the Belarusian people to determine their own future.

They discussed ways to encourage talks between Lukashenko and the opposition, possibly by supporting a dialogue process fostered by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Judy Dempsey, Nonresident Senior Fellow at Carnegie Europe and Editor in Chief of Strategic Europe, said, the EU already said it does not recognize the outcome of the election. The idea of new elections would rattle Putin, whose own record on free and fair elections has been challenged so far unsuccessfully by protesters in Russia.

season could determine whether Bolsonaro, an avid supporter of bringing more farming and ranching to the Amazon, is willing and able to halt the fires. Experts say the

Amazon continues to burn in 2020 despite promises to save it



A member of the Kayapo indigenous tribe holds a request given by a judicial officer asking them to clear the highway BR163 within 24 hours, during a protest in the outskirts of Novo Progresso in Para State, Brazil, on Wednesday.

As smoke wreaths Novo Progresso, this year's burning</p

# How safe are our children?



**The huge spike in consumption of child pornography during the lockdown must force our regulators to crack down effectively, argue ANSHRITHA RAI and MUDIT AHUJA**

A recent report published by India Child Protection Fund (ICPF) claimed that child pornography consumption in the country has spiked by an alarming rate of 95 per cent during the lockdown period. The report cites data from the world's largest pornographic website 'pornhub' and suggests a snowballing increase in search for keywords like 'sexy child', 'teen sexvideos' and 'child porn'. Worryingly, the government helpline for child abuse received 92,000 SOS calls seeking protection in a short span of 11 days.

The steep increase in the number of hours spent online by children, especially in the wake of the lockdown, makes them increasingly vulnerable to the crimes of the e-world. It is therefore evident that there exists an inextricable link between child pornography and child abuse.

The Supreme Court in a suo motu petition dealing with similar issues directed the government to devise guidelines to tackle the challenges in banning child pornography. However, to date, the petition remains pending. In spite of Indian law prohibiting the consumption of child pornography in private, the disturbing trend of the migration of paedophiles online raises the question of whether there is a need to revisit the existing legal framework.

#### Implications

Currently, there exist two legislations dealing with child pornography. They are (i) Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 and its allied rules (POCSO) and (ii) The Information Technology Act, 2000 (IT Act). POCSO defines 'child pornography' and penalises the possession, circulation and storage of pornographic content involving a child. Section 67B of the IT Act imposes a fine and provides for imprisonment extending to 7 years for publishing, browsing, downloading and distributing content involving child pornography.

#### Inadequacy of legislations

The pervasiveness of the horrific social evil of child pornography heralds the prevalence of massive loopholes in these penal legislations. Notwithstanding the ban on pornographic websites in India, the country still stands at the helm of pornography consumption worldwide. Easy access to Virtual Private Networks (VPN) and proxy servers makes it effortless to conceal one's identity when visiting such websites from unknown locations. This thwarts the process of tracking the pur-

veyors of child crime by the investigative agencies.

Further, Section 79 of the IT Act is a safe harbour provision which grants conditional immunity to intermediaries from liabilities for third party acts. This leniency towards intermediaries provides little motivation to them to exercise timely supervision over the activities relating to child porn of third parties.

#### The Denouement

In defiance of the legislative provisions on child pornography, child sexual abuse material continues to be accessed. This persistent exploitative use of children is testament to the inadequacies of the existing policing of child pornography.

Earlier this year, a Rajya Sabha panel advocated a slew of legislative, technological, institutional and social measures to combat the menace of child pornography. Observing that the perpetrators always appear to be one step ahead of the regulators, the committee emphasized that its recommendations would have impact only if enforced as an integrated package of measures. This multi-pronged strategy proposed should be commended for the stringent punitive approach assumed by the panel. Imposing accountability and liability on intermediaries is a welcome move.

The need of the hour is for the government to implement a total ban on Virtual Private Networks and simultaneously, to enact stricter measures for the regulation of intermediaries.

It also becomes crucial that the carte blanche exercised by children on the internet be limited by parental control. Identifying the original source and distributors of child sexual abuse material is near impossible and warrants immediate consideration for a successful crackdown on child pornography. It is incumbent on the government to ensure positive actions for curtailing the consumption, distribution and browsing of content related to child pornography.

The time is ripe to acknowledge this elephant in the room and to adopt stricter measures in order to enhance living conditions of the building blocks of the nation. To quote the Apex Court "Innocent children cannot be made prey to these kind of painful situations, and a nation, by no means, can afford to carry any kind of experiment with its children in the name of liberty and freedom of expression."

The writers are students of ILS Law College, Pune.

## MAKING WOMEN DEPENDENT

An archaic legal concept and the misogynist approach adopted by courts deprives many Pakistani women of their rights, says SARA MALKANI

Over a month ago, the Pakistan Supreme Court passed an order on a petition filed by Justice Qazi Faez Isa challenging an inquiry against him motivated by his failure to disclose properties owned by his wife and adult children in his income tax returns and wealth statements.

One of the grounds put forth in the petition to challenge the inquiry is worthy of attention for the light it sheds on patriarchal and outmoded notions of family relations that unfortunately continue to undermine the independent status of women in Pakistan's legal system. Justice Isa should only be expected to account for his wife's assets if it is assumed that she has no autonomy and is very unlikely to have acquired wealth independently. The allegation against Justice Isa is premised entirely on this assumption rooted in stereotypes about the dependency of women on male 'heads of households' and their inability to exercise free agency.

That ascribing any degree of credibility to the allegation against Justice Isa requires prescribing to sexist ideas was even acknowledged by some Supreme Court judges during a hearing when they asked the counsel for the government how the allegation could be reconciled with women's independent status under our laws. The government's counsel responded by asserting that the complete dependence of women is recognised across religions, even referring to the practice of sati as an example.

Unfortunately, an outmoded legal concept commonly used in Pakistan contributes to the perpetuation of these sexist assumptions. 'Benami', a legal convention with roots in the colonial era is often deployed to challenge women's ownership of property. A person can be deemed a 'benami' (as opposed to 'real') owner of property to which she has legal title if she did not finance the purchase of the asset and it was never intended for her benefit. The recognition of benami ownership is the result of the common practice of giving legal title to someone else on the understanding that the beneficial interest in the asset will go to the person who used his own financial means to purchase the asset. The purpose behind this practice is often to shield oneself from tax consequences or to hide 'ill-gotten' wealth.

While the media is more likely to report on benami transactions in the context of high-profile political cases (the benami bank account allegations against former president Asif Ali Zardari, for example) the overlooked consequence of the benami principle is its common use to challenge ownership of property by women. So-called benami suits are often filed in relation to disputes at the time of marital separation, divorce or inheritance denying women their right to property on the basis that they are not 'real' owners.

Men may also be considered benami owners; however, given the patriarchal notions of women's dependency on men, courts are more likely to entertain benami suits against women and even pass temporary stay orders preventing women from claiming possession of their property. Although the burden of proof required to declare that the legal title holder is not the real owner of property is high, the resolution of these cases can take several years in our notoriously slow judicial system. The consequence of this is that women are placed in the unjust position of having to defend their legal title against spurious allegations.

Just one example is a 2010 judgement of the Supreme Court in the case Ghulam Murtaza vs Asia Bibi, where the court rejected the appellant's claim that his former wife was a benami co-owner of the property to which she had legal title as there was no evidence that at the time of the asset's purchase the wife was meant to be merely a benami rather than a real owner. The decision, while fair and reasonable, was reached after almost 17 years of litigation during which a trial court declared that the wife was a benami owner and had no legal rights to the property.

By creating a distinction between real and benami ownership, courts are effectively giving cover to those planting their assets in somebody else's name to escape tax consequences or hide ill-gotten wealth while at the same time enabling frivolous litigation challenging valid property ownership. In recognition of this, a law was passed in 2017 prohibiting benami transactions. Assets in the name of spouse and children are specifically excluded from the definition of 'benami', which means that they must be deemed to be owned by the person who has the legal title. In other words, the law entails that a person can no longer claim to be the 'real' owner of property owned by his spouse or adult children.

In spite of the passage of the law, however, the presumption that women and children are not real owners of property persists. Suits remain pending in courts whereby women are denied their right to occupy and enjoy property to which they have legal title. Although there was no direct allegation in the references against Justice Isa that his wife is a benami owner, the continuation of the inquiry against his wife reflects an assumption that she is no more than an extension of her husband.

Even while quashing the reference against Justice Isa, the Supreme Court directed the Federal Board of Revenue to investigate Justice Isa's wife's and adult children's income tax filings and submit a report to the Supreme Judicial Council.

An archaic legal concept combined with stereotypical notions of gender not only creates a great deal of unnecessary confusion, but also destabilises women's property rights while reinforcing outdated ideas about female dependency. Such anachronistic concepts have no place in a legal system that recognises the independent agency of women and equality between the sexes.

The writer is Senior Lecturer, School of Arts and Social Sciences, Department of Journalism, City, University of London. This article was published on www.theconversation.com. Most journalists' identities have been disguised in this article.

## Red lines expand as Hong Kong's Press suffers

**The chilling effects of Beijing's new National Security Law for Hong Kong are being felt most by journalists, says YUEN CHAN**

When more than 200 police officers raided the headquarters of Hong Kong's biggest – and only – pro-democracy mass-circulation newspaper, Apple Daily, on August 10, many people feared this spelled the end of press freedom in the territory.

Earlier that day, they had arrested the paper's owner, 72-year-old tycoon Jimmy Lai, under a controversial new National Security Law (NSL) for allegedly colluding with foreign forces. He has since been released on bail.

For Apple Daily reporter Patrick\*, the symbolism was clear: "[It was] the state apparatus using a paramilitary force to intrude upon a media organisation that holds a critical stance. Officers were searching journalistic material. It's a clear message, this will happen to you if you're disobedient."

Freedom of the press is enshrined in Hong Kong's Basic Law but has suffered in recent years from political and economic pressure and resultant creeping self-censorship, which is reflected in the territory's poor recent performance in press freedom indices. Yet Hong Kong's media is still relatively independent and robust – especially compared with mainland China.

The NSL, drafted and approved in Beijing, threatens to change that. It introduces sweeping but vague charges of subversion, secession, collusion with foreign forces and terrorism. Incitement of hatred against the national and local governments is also outlawed.

I spoke with several local reporters working in TV, radio, newspapers and online media to find out what it's like on the ground, one and a half months after the NSL was passed. All but one, including Patrick, quoted above, requested that I use an alias when quoting them for fear of reprisals.

Many local journalists report increased self-censorship. Patrick says mainstream media organisations now tend to quote already public comments of pro-independence figures rather than interview them directly, and that journalists are losing the "freedom from fear".

"After an interview, I do think about the risk... it's just a fleeting moment of hesitation, but that moment is a kind of self-censorship."

Selene, a television reporter, says that when interviewing pro-independence figures she and other journalists now avoid discussing advocacy for international sanctions. Journalists worry about showing shots of protest banners with the popular slogan "Liberate Hong Kong", which the government says violates the NSL.

James, a reporter at I-Cable, is worried that reports deemed critical of the police could result in charges of incitement of hatred against the authorities: "The red lines are expanding quickly to include anything

the regime disagrees with... it's very hard to practice journalism in such an oppressive space."

Although the government has said the NSL will only target a minority of people, it has already had a chilling effect on freedom of expression, according to the journalists I spoke with. Newspaper reporter Kristy says interviewees have become reluctant to speak on the record, or at all, while journalists are afraid they'll be forced to divulge their sources.

Alvin Lum, who covers local politics for the independent online outlet CitizenNews (and was happy for me to use his name) says the NSL is a "game-changer". It requires journalists to hand over "journalistic materials" and the law is unclear whether reporting certain views could be seen as advocacy.

A number of other recent incidents have shaken confidence in press freedom. One is a series of attacks on the government-funded public broadcaster RTHK, including government criticism of a journalist who asked a World Health Organization official a question about Taiwan. The government has since ordered a far-reaching six-month review of RTHK.

Another concern is recent changes in management at NOW TV and I-Cable, both



until now well regarded as relatively independent news operations. The new managers are either regarded as pro-Beijing, or are less qualified than those they replaced. Meanwhile there have been press reports that the government has set up a new national security unit to vet visas for foreign journalists.

Given the uncertainties created by the NSL, and escalating tensions between Beijing and Washington – in which journalist visas have become tools of retaliation – foreign media organisations may be tempted to follow the New York Times, which recently relocated part of its Hong Kong-based operations to Seoul.

Apple Daily reporter Patrick says: "I hope the international media don't leave Hong Kong so easily, or station fewer journalists here. Having more media reporting in Hong Kong will help to protect Hong Kong's press freedom, freedoms or rule of law."

There is a tendency when describing developments in Hong Kong to resort to hyperbole – it's always the "darkest day", or the "coldest winter" for Hong Kong's autonomy, freedoms or rule of law.

The gradual undermining of values, safeguards and institutions that underpin Hong Kong in recent years – and especially since the 2019 protests – reveals the inadequacy of

such language. There is a common saying about this decline that "there is no most, only more" – meaning things can be expected to worsen.

Hong Kong's media will face more challenges ahead. Its journalists are nervous and fearful – and some are seriously considering their future in journalism. One of the frontline journalists I spoke to described press freedom as being "seriously ill" and another said it was "close to death".

But they aren't ready to give up. "We'll take one step at a time. [Press freedom] isn't dead, there are a lot of reporters working hard!" Selene told me.

She pointed out that Apple Daily was still publishing – it printed hundreds of thousands of extra copies after the raid. Citizens eagerly snapped up copies and bought shares in the paper's parent company Next Digital.

As Raymond, a 15-year industry veteran says: "Everyone – the public, reporters, editors, interviewees – is a part of this struggle for press freedom. It's alive as long as people are willing to keep it alive."

The writer is Senior Lecturer, School of Arts and Social Sciences, Department of Journalism, City, University of London. This article was published on www.theconversation.com. Most journalists' identities have been disguised in this article.

The writer is a lawyer. Dawn/ANN.



## BUSY DAYS

England captain Joe Root (in photo, left) has said he "would love" to play in Pakistan but is unsure when the space could be found in a crowded schedule ahead of a planned tour in 2022. England have not played in Pakistan since 2005-6.

For more updates

www.thestatesman.com

## THUMBNAILS

Rahim's decision: Spaniard Jon Rahm enjoyed plenty of success on golf's European Tour last year but the world No 1 said on Tuesday he might not defend any of his titles because of the Covid-19 outbreak. He is in the FedExCup play-off opener in Norton, USA, though.

**Bad light:** The International Cricket Council is likely to discuss Test cricket's bad light rules which have been criticised during the ongoing England-Pakistan series. Rain and bad light combined to limit action in the second Test between England and Pakistan.

**Malik's charge:** Former captain Salim Malik on Tuesday lashed out at ex-Pakistan skipper Rashid Latif for threatening his way into the national team during his playing days and also blasted the Pakistan Cricket Board for stalling his entry into Gaddafi Stadium is Lahore.

**Spurs' gain:** Former England goalkeeper Joe Hart has joined Tottenham on a two-year contract. He was a free agent after leaving Burnley at the end of the 2019-20 season. Hart will provide competition alongside Paulo Gazzaniga for regular number one Hugo Lloris.

**Narine, Rashid shine:** Brilliant all-round performances from Sunil Narine and Rashid Khan gave their respective teams a winning start on the opening day of the Hero Caribbean Premier League in Tarouba (Trinidad and Tobago). While Trinbago Knight Riders ended Guyana Amazon Warriors' 11-match winning streak beating them by four wickets in a match reduced to 17 overs, Barbados Tridents edged out St. Kitts & Nevis Patriots by six runs at the Brian Lara Academy here on Tuesday.

**'Still a brother':** Ishant Sharma is "still a brother" for former West Indies captain Darren Sammy, who holds "no grudges" against the India pacer for using a racially offensive word to address him in jest during their stint as teammates in the IPL. Sammy had alleged that during his time with Sunrisers Hyderabad in 2014 and 2015, he was often referred to as 'Kaalu' (Black), a racial slur the meaning of which he understood only recently. I don't hold grudges. I have spoken to Ishant Sharma. I consider him a brother like I did back in 2014 and '15 when playing for Sunrisers Hyderabad," Sammy said.

**Revenue loss:** FIFA forecast the pandemic will cause a \$120 million drop in its revenue plan through the 2022 World Cup in a revised four-year budget published Wednesday. Cost-cutting is also predicted to help offset a \$20 million hit from being unable to stage a revamped Club World Cup in June 2021, when Europe and South America stage their postponed continental championships. Still, FIFA said most World Cup broadcast and sponsor deals were already signed and should keep the same profit in the 2019-22 financial cycle, even on reduced income of \$6.44 billion.

**Nagal through to quarters in Prague:** India's top singles player Sumit Nagal advanced to the singles quarterfinals of the Prague Open with a come-from-behind win over lower-ranked Kiri Lehecka. Sixth seed and world number 127 had to battle hard to prevail 5-7 7-6(4) 6-3 in two hours and 21-minute second-round contest of the Euro 137,560 clay court event. Nagal is expected to meet three-time Grand Slam winner Stan Wawrinka in the next round. The Swiss is up against Germany's Oscar Otte in his second round contest. Nagal is also competing in the doubles draw.

# Neymar the star as Parisians pull it off

RB Leipzig 0  
Paris Saint-Germain 3

MIGUEL DELANEY  
LISBON, 19 AUGUST

Brazilian running the game - but pretty much all of their star quality was on show.

They eventually got there. It was a quality and level of performance Leipzig just couldn't match.

While Julian Nagelsmann has imbued the side with such an impressive tactical idea, it needs full commitment to work against a team like PSG and not to be fatally compromised by individual errors.

Perhaps that's one negative of their otherwise impressive recruitment, especially in contrast to a club as resourced as PSG. The emphasis on young players on their first contracts may bring a commitment, and hunger, but it can also mean Leipzig don't have the experience to handle occasions like this. Ten of the starting line-up were 26 or under and there were a few moments that suggested it was a game too big for them.

Chelsea 2012. It would mark a similar journey. That is the stage they've long wanted. This semi-final was meanwhile a stage too big for Leipzig, who so visibly seemed to be affected by the occasion.

PSG's many stars, however, rose to it. Angel Di Maria and Neymar were especially impressive - the Argentine setting up both goals either side of scoring his own, the



the second, there was another bad pass by goalkeeper Peter Gulacsi, before poor handling and just defensive collapse for the third.

Those mistakes didn't go all the way to deciding the

game, of course. Even more significant was the supreme quality on the other side, as well as so much big-game experience. The way Leipzig's defenders lost Marquinhos was bad, but the way Di Maria

found him was divine. It was a supreme delivery, perfectly placed, perfectly weighted, so it just flew off the Brazilian's head and in.

There was then Neymar's touch for Di Maria's own fin-

ish. Gulacsi may have almost gifted them the goal, but that was some way to take the opportunity.

Juan Bernat then displayed some ingenuity in getting back into an onside position for the third, although the cross from Di Maria was again perfect.

The ball went over the line just before Neymar could get there, but a goal was really all that was missing from his performance. The Brazilian had already shown he was more than willing to seize the moment, and make the game his own. This felt his best European performance since the 6-1 win over PSG themselves with Barca in February 2017, and may well have been one of the most influential displays of his career.

He was clearly in that mindset of complete focus, total commitment. It meant he caused chaos any time he got the ball near the Leipzig goal, with that constant threat doubtlessly bringing the kind of uncertainty and panic that led to more individual errors.

He almost caught Gulacsi out twice before Di Maria's

goal, twice hitting the post. The first was a close-range finish from another passing error, the second a speculative and spectacular free-kick as he almost caught out the goalkeeper's positioning.

It was also something that stuck about his performance. While it increasingly felt more and more important on the night that PSG have far more big-game experience than Leipzig - Di Maria was man-of-the-match in this very stadium in the final six years ago - this felt a player coming of age. This is Neymar's time.

And that, symbolically and consequently, means it might well be PSG's time. This is why they signed him for such money and fanfare.

This felt a club moving onto the next stage. Questions should now abound about what exactly that club is, given Qatar's use of it, as they reach the greatest stage.

The very fact they're there, though, means Neymar and his teammates are answering every question asked of them. They just need one more big response. THE INDEPENDENT

## Tendulkar misses his first car, on the lookout for owners

AGENCIES  
MUMBAI, 19 AUGUST



From BMW to Ferrari to Nissan GT-R, batting great Sachin Tendulkar (in photo) has some of the world's best supercars parked in his garage. His love for cars is not unknown to the world, but very few know how emotionally connected he still is to his first car which he bought from his own money after becoming a professional cricketer.

Talking on a special episode of Mudit Dani's show 'In the Spotlight', the Master Blaster revealed that he doesn't have his first car with him anymore and would like to appeal to those who bought it to get in touch. Tendulkar is very keen to have the car back for sentimental reasons.

"My first car was a Maruti 800. Unfortunately it is not with me right now. I would love to have it back again with me. So, people listening to me, feel free to contact and get in touch," he said on the show.

Sachin's collection of cars has always been in the news. His passion for cars began at an early age from the balcony of his house in Bandra from where he used to spot exotic cars for hours with his brother.

"There was a massive open drive-in movie hall near my house where people used to park their cars and watch the movie, sitting in it. So I, along with my brother, used to stand in our balcony for hours to watch those cars," the Bharat Ratna honoree said.

The batting genius, who

## Koeman never understood Everton but that won't be a problem at Barcelona

TONY EVANS



Ronald Koeman (in photo) will swagger into the Nou Camp. The new Barcelona coach has never been short of confidence or ambition. His entire managerial career has been aimed at returning to Barca, where he spent six years as a player and a further two as an assistant to Louis van Gaal.

In the two decades since leaving Catalonia, Koeman has held 10 jobs. At everyone - even in his most recent role at the helm of an exciting young Holland side - the Dutchman has given the impression that he was just passing through. He has now reached his destination. Because every position was a stepping stone, the 57-year-old did not seem to worry about making friends or learning the culture of a club. This was particularly evident during his last stint in the Premier League, a 16-month spell with Everton that ended with the team in the relegation zone and Koeman being replaced by Sam Allardyce. Barcelona must have overlooked that section of his resume.

All Koeman cared about was results. In his two seasons at Southampton he got them, taking the club to seventh and sixth places in the Premier League. Bigger things were expected at Everton. Goodison also has other requirements but the former defender was not interested in the metaphysics of managing a club like Everton. Barcelona are as much a concept as a football team. They are a focus for Catalan identity and proudly proclaim their motto: "Mes que un club." Everton also believe they are more than a club. Koeman barely seemed to acknowledge

edge Goodison's uniqueness. Initially his directness and decisiveness were welcome after the confusion and sloppiness of the tail end of Roberto Martinez's tenure. Off the pitch his approach raised eyebrows. Koeman was not interested in Everton's traditions. He posted a photograph of a Christmas tree decked in red decorations much to the chagrin of many Evertonians. Red is anathema for many at Goodison and the manager later put a picture online of the tree trimmed with a different colour scheme that did not feature the hated hues of Liverpool. It was an amusing episode and Koeman embraced the humour, blaming his wife, but it was emblematic of his attitude. Everton's history and the mindset of the fans appeared to be incidental to him. There were many occasions where his demeanour caused annoyance to Goodison diehards. After a gut-wrenching home derby defeat when Sadio Mane scored in the 94th minute, Koeman entered the press room afterwards laughing and smiling. To the Dutchman it was just another defeat. For Evertonians any loss to Liverpool, never mind

one in such dispiriting circumstances, is a calamity. David Moyes recognised the undercurrents that determined Goodison's sense of self, embraced them and rode them through the bad times. Koeman did not care. When he hit his nadir he had few friends to defend him.

The start of his second season on Merseyside was grim. After spending £140 million in the transfer window, expectations were high. Koeman's fate was determined by three players, all of whom he wanted badly.

The two he got made it easy to question the manager's eye for a player. Gylfi Sigurdsson and Davy Klaassen cost almost £70 million between them and their impact was marginal. The third player was Olivier Giroud, earmarked as a replacement for Romelu Lukaku, who had been sold to Manchester United. When the pursuit of Giroud failed, Everton were left without a top-class striker. Nine games into his second season Koeman was sacked. His only regret seemed to be it interrupted his forward motion towards the Nou Camp. There were plenty of other people to share the responsibility for the chaos at Goodison but Koeman's detached manner made it easier for him to be the focus of the blame. The spell in charge of Holland has restored most of the damage done by his departure from Merseyside three years ago. Catalonia will embrace the Dutchman once again but getting this dream role is only the beginning. Keeping it will be a tough prospect given the dysfunction at the Nou Camp. Koeman might have to change his direct, no-nonsense style to adapt to the egos of the squad. THE INDEPENDENT

## Azam only batsman ranked among top quintet in all formats

DAWN/ANN  
KARACHI, 19 AUGUST



After regaining his career-best fifth position in the International Cricket Council's Test rankings on Tuesday, right-hander Babar Azam (in photo) is currently the only batsman in the world to be ranked among the top five in all formats. Azam moved up a spot to number five after his 47-run knock in the second Test match against England in Southampton. The match was drawn after rain repeatedly interrupted play.

With 879 points, Azam is the top batsman in the Twenty20 International format and is ranked at number three in the One-Day International format. He is the only Pakistani batsman ranked among the top 10 in all three formats. The new rankings, released yesterday, also showed the upward mobility of other Pakistani players. Mohammad Abbas - currently the only Pakistani bowler among the top 10 in the Test rankings - moved up to the eighth spot after his 2/28 in the second Test against England. Among the teams, Pakistan currently occupy the seventh spot in the ICC Test rankings, sixth in the 50-over format and fourth in T20s.

In another development, reacting to the dreary draw to the weather-plagued second Test against England at Southampton's Ageas Bowl, Pakistan bowling coach Waqar Younis has said he feels cricket administrators must do a "rethink" about the playing conditions to guarantee more action. He admitted it would have been possible for both the teams to spend a longer time in the field instead of

being confined to their dressing-rooms in a match where just 134.3 overs had been bowled because of rain and bad light.

"It was really very, very frustrating for everyone concerned. The weather, for sure, was not in our hands but having said that there were moments when the Test could have moved on in terms of action on the field. I think it is time playing with the pink balls under lights was considered a viable option for the survival of cricket. The use of floodlights must be made mandatory when there is a lack of natural light."

"The interpretations governing the laws on light are now being discussed and to suggest that the pink ball is the answer to it is still at an experimental phase from my perspective. There had been just one Test in England with the pink ball. The others who have played with pink balls have said that there were moments when the Test could have moved on in terms of action on the field. I think it is time playing with the pink balls under lights was considered a viable option for the survival of cricket. The use of floodlights must be made mandatory when there is a lack of natural light."

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## Coronavirus infection found in US Open 'bubble'

AGENCIES  
NEW YORK, 19 AUGUST



A positive test for the novel coronavirus has been found in the New York tennis bubble where the US Open is set to take place later this month, the United States Tennis Association (USTA) announced on Tuesday.

USTA medical officer Bernard Camins revealed that the person who has contracted the virus "is not a player" and is asymptomatic.

The finding comes after 1,400 tests for the disease were conducted since Aug 13 in the bubble at the Billie Jean King centre in New York City, where the Cincinnati Association of Tennis Professionals event and the US Open are to be staged.

Dr Camins said the male individual initially tested negative but then a second test two days later came up positive. He added that the per-

son's hotel room-mate has also been placed under quarantine. "It would have been nice if he was positive the first time. But the reason we added the second test at 48 hours was to account for the time we couldn't be covering," Dr Camins said.

The US Open, which was rescheduled to start on 31 August, has been hit hard by the Covid-19 pandemic, which has led to a host of top players pulling out of the tournament.

"We respect their decision not to take part in the tournament. It's up to each individual player to make that decision," said USTA chief executive Mike Dowse. "I want to remind everyone, this was not a host at all costs. It had to adhere to our three principles. We're confident it has."

However, the men's draw will feature world number one Novak Djokovic and other big names like third-ranked Dominic Thiem and fellow top 10 players Daniil Medvedev, Stefanos Tsitsipas and Alexander Zverev. US Open organisers said on Tuesday that they were happy with the slate of competitors for this year's tournament, despite numerous dropouts by high-profile names amid the ongoing Covid-19 outbreak.

One of tennis' four Grand Slams and the crown jewel of the US tennis calendar, the US Open usually attracts the world's greatest players to Flushing Meadows every year.

## Will have a chat with Ashwin about 'Mankading', says Ponting

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE  
SYDNEY, 19 AUGUST



Former Australia skipper Ricky Ponting (in photo) is not in favour of 'Mankading' and has said that he will have a chat with off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin when he plays for the Delhi Capitals in the upcoming edition of the Indian Premier League (