I'HE ASIAN AGE

NEW DELHI SUNDAY 30 AUGUST 2020

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MOVIES 7

'Black Panther' Chadwick Boseman dies of cancer. He was 43.



NATION 3

Nadda holds meet with BJP MPs

TABLOID 11

Actress Richa about Rahul Dravid



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Demonstrators walk on Pennsylvania Avenue during a march in Washington on Friday, the 57th anniversary of the Martin Luther King's "I Have A Dream" speech. — AP

Army called in to rescue people in flood-hit MP dist

Bhopal: The Army has been called in to rescue people in the marooned areas in Madhva Pradesh's Hosangabad district following flash floods in Narmada caused by heavy downpour in the region in the last 24 hours. Incessant rains in the last 24 hours have caused floods in Narmada, leaving major parts of Hosangabad district marooned. The river was flowing 9 ft above danger level. "NDRF teams have also been pressed into service," said Hosangabad divisional commissioner Rajnish Srivastav. Full report on Page 4

1 jawan, 3 militants killed in Kashmir

Srinagar: A soldier of the Indian Army was killed and three terrorists were gunned down on Saturday during a encounter in Pulwama district of J&K, officials said. Earlier, three terrorists were killed in an encounter in Shopian. Full report on Page 3

IIT-I to teach key

courses in Sanskrit

Indore: The Indian Institute of Technology here has introduced a unique course to impart mathematical and scientific knowledge from ancient texts in Sanskrit, an official said on Saturday. The course was started in a bid to expose the present generation to ancient knowledge, he said. Full report on Page 4

COUNTERPOINT



The car will suit **Indian conditions** more!





Max: 35°C Min: 24°C **RH:** 66% Rain: 23mm

Forecast: Rainfall

Sarvari: Dakshinayana **Tithi:** Bhadrapada Shuddha Dwadasi till 8.22 am Star: Uttarashada till 1.53 pm Varjyam: 6.05 pm to 7.46 pm Durmuhurtam: 4.49 pm to 5.38 pm Rahukalam: 4.30 pm to

> **SUNSET TODAY 6.46 PM SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.58 AM MOONRISE TOMORROW 4.24 PM**

RNI No. 57290/94, Regd No: DL-SW-05/4189/15-17

over Bihar elections

Chadha gushes

INDIA UNLOCK 4

Metros from Sept. 7, gatherings from 21st

No restrictions on inter-state movement from Sept. 1

New Delhi, Aug. 29: The Union home ministry on Saturday issued the Unlock 4 guidelines under which Metro trains will be allowed to resume services from September 7 in a graded manner, while political, social and religious congregations of up to 100 people will be permitted from September

21. However, schools, colleges and other educational and coaching institutions will remain closed for students till September 30, with some relaxations for students of classes 9 to 12.

In a significant directive, the home ministry said that state govern-ments shall not impose any local lockdown out-side the containment zones without prior consultation with the central government. This bears significance

as sporadic and weekend lockdowns have been implemented by various state governments across the country. The coronavirus induced countrywide lockdown was first announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi from March 25 and it was extended in phases till May 31. The Unlock process of the country had begun on June 1 with the graded reopening of commercial, social, religious and other activities. Under the Unlock 4 phase, social, academic, sports, entertainment, cultural, religious, politi-cal functions and other congregations will be permitted with a ceiling of

100 people, with effect

from September 21.



Metro train services can resume in a phased manner from Septem-

Lockdowns can't be imposed outside containment zones Social, political, acad-

emic, sports, religious and other functions will be allowed with a limit of 100 people

However, such limited gatherings can be held with the mandatory wearing of face masks, social distancing and provision for thermal scanning and hand wash or sanitizer.

The permission to hold political and other gatherings came ahead of the Bihar assembly elections, which are due in October-November.

The home ministry said that after extensive consultation with states and UTs, it has been decided that schools, colleges, educational and coaching institutions will continue to remain closed for students and regular class activity up to September 30. The ministry said that states and Union Territory governments Union may permit up to 50 per cent of teaching and non-teaching staff to be called to the schools at a time for

online teaching or tele-

counselling and related work. Students of classes 9 to 12 may be permitted to visit their schools in areas outside the containment zones only on a voluntary basis for taking guidance from their teachers. Cinema halls, swimming pools, enter-tainment parks, theatres and similar places will remain shut and international air travel of passengers, except as permitted by MHA, will not be allowed. Open-air theatres will be permitted to open with effect from September 21. Metro rail services, which have been suspended since March 22, will be allowed to resume with effect from September 7 in a graded

to 50 per cent of

teaching and non-

teaching staff to be

called to schools at a

Students of classes 9

to 12 may be permit-ted to visit their

schools in areas out-

side the containment

Moreover, there will be no restriction on interstate and intra-state movement of persons and

National Sports Awards go virtual









Archer Atanu Das (left) and athlete Dutee Chand (right) show their Arjuna Award 2020 certificates received from President Ram Nath Kovind virtually due to Covid-19 pandemic in Kolkata on Saturday. Dharmendra Tiwary (centre) shows his Dronacharya Award 2020 certificate for his contribution in the field of archery. India's sporting heroes were bestowed the annual national awards in an unparalleled online ceremony amid the Covid-19 pandemic. Report on Page 8

Raina leaves **IPL** over family issue

C. SANTHOSH KUMAR

There seems to be no end to Chennai Super Kings' IPL-13 misery. After Friday's Covid-19 shocker, the franchise suffered a double whammy on Saturday when senior batsman Suresh Raina pulled out of the tournament citing 'personal reasons', and another player — Ruturaj Gaikwad — test-ed positive. With this, the team's Covid-19 tally stands at 13, forcing the

organisers to put the league fixtures on hold. Raina, who returned to India on Saturday morning, hasn't given any reasons for his IPL exit. However, speculation is rife that the recently retired international cricketer is grieving a family member who

■ More on Page 8

■ India withdraws from 'Kavkaz 2020' as China part of it India pulls out of Russia war game

PAWAN BALI NEW DELHI, AUG. 29

India has withdrawn from multi-nation military exercise "Kavkaz 2020" in Russia next month as China was one of the participating countries.

India did not want to participate in a military exercise with China at a time when armies from the two countries are involved in a stand-off in Eastern Ladakh for the last three months. Pakistan is also participating in the Kavkaz 2020 military exercise. Some 20 countries are participating in this exercise, including

INDIA DID not want to participate in a military exercise with China at a time when armies from the two countries are involved in a stand-off in Eastern Ladakh for the last three months. Pakistan is also participating in the event.

The exercise Kavkaz is being held in Astrakhan region of Southern Russia from 15-27 September 2020. The military exercise is part of a four year exercise cycle of the Russian Army and the name is based on the rorism in the Northern region where these exer- and Caucasus region. The

cises are held. Kavkaz was last held in 2012 and As per the earlier plan, India's participation in the exercise was to be a

company level strength (180 troops from an infantry battalion plus elements of other arms) along with elements of IAF and observers from the Indian Navy. Some 13,000 troops will participate in the exercise. China is likely to participate with substantial numbers of naval surface combatants. The aim of the exercise is to provide real-time training to counter international tercurrent exercise setting will involve both offen sive and defensive operations against international terror organisations.

Meanwhile, defence ministry in a statement said that Russia and India are close and privileged strategic partners. At Russia's invitation, India has been participating in many international events. "However, in view of pandemic and consequent difficulties in exercise, including arrangements of logistics, India has decided not to send contingent this year to Kavkaz-2020. The same has been informed to the Russian defence ministry.

19 injured as police fires at Muharram procession in J&K

YUSUF JAMEEL SRINAGAR, AUG. 29

At least 19 mourners were injured when the police fired teargas canisters and pellet shotguns to disperse a Muharram tazia procession in Srinagar's Bemina area on Saturday. Hospital sources and

witnesses said that 12 of the injured were hit by pellets and that the condition of at least one of them, who received multiple pellet wounds in the face, is stated to be criti-

The police burst teargas canisters to disperse the

ber of mourners took to the streets in congested Gaw Kadal area of the summer capital and amid chanting of slogans and rhymes in praise of Imam Hussain, the grandson of Prophet Muhammad who was martyred along with 71 of his family members and companions in the Battle of Karbala (Iraq) in October 680, began intense self-flagellation. The witnesses said that the police and other secu-

However, a large num-

rity forces watched them from a distance and did not try to interfere unlike at Bemina and Shalimar. Shia mourners in Shalimar area as well, on the outskirts of the city, later during the day.

The police authorities said that only "mild force" was used against a Turn to Page 2

Farming must be taught in schools: Modi

New Delhi, Aug. 29: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday pitched for taking farm education to middle school level, saying necessary reforms have been made in this regard in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. "There is a need to take knowledge related to agriculture and its practical application to school level. Efforts are (on) to introduce the Agriculture subject at middle school level in villages," Modi said.

This will develop agriculture related understanding in students and enable them to give information about agrifarming techniques and marketing, to their family members, he said.

— PTI

More on Page 3

GST SHORTFALL

Centre writes to all states, lays out borrowing options

New Delhi, Aug. 29: The Central government on Saturday wrote to states suggesting options of borrowing money to make up for the ₹2.35 lakh crore shortfall in GST revenues expected in the ongoing

Two days after first suggesting to states to borrow money to make up for the shortfall at the GST Council meeting, the finance ministry wrote to state governments saying they could borrow either via a special window it will facilitate through the RBI or raise debt from the

While the Centre has reasoned its recommendations on premise that it is already saddled with a ment given the slowdown in revenue collections due to a slump in the economy, non-BJP ruled states such as Punjab, Kerala, Delhi and West Bengal have already stated that raising debt is not an option for already stretched state finances.

In a letter to finance secretaries of all states and union territories, Union Finance Secretary Ajay Bhushan Pandey said while additional borrow-ing by the Centre influ-ences the yields on central government securities (G-secs) and has other macro-economic repercussions, the yields on state securities do not directly influence other yields and do not have the lective interest of Centre and states and in the interest of the nation and of all economic entities including the private sector, not to do any avoidable borrowing at the central level when it could be done at the state level," Pandev wrote in the let-

Compensation payment has been an issue since August 2019 with GST collections faltering. In the current fiscal, the compensation requirement of states has been estimated at ₹3 lakh crore, of which ₹65,000 crore would be funded from the revenues garnered by levy of cess. This leaves a shortfall of ₹2.35 lakh crore.

'Kamala not competent, Ivanka is better'

WASHINGTON, AUG. 29

Kamala Harris is "not competent" to be President, US President Donald Trump has said as he launched an attack on the Indian-origin sena-

tor's credentials for the

top post.
Addressing his supporters at a Republican campaign rally in New Hampshire on Friday, Trump said he would support seeing a female president in the US but suggested that his daughter and senior White House adviser Ivanka Trump would be a better candi-

date for such a role.

Harris, 55, was a presi-

Donald Trump dential aspirant until last year before she dropped out of the race because of lack of popular support. Harris returned to political limelight after Joe Biden, the Democratic Party's presidential candidate, picked her as his running mate in the November 3 election.

Born to a Jamaican father and an Indian mother, Harris is the first

Indian-American and first Black woman to be picked by a major American political party for the top post. "You know I want to the first woman President also, but I don't want to see a woman President get into that position the way she'd do it, and she's not compe-

tent," Trump said. "She's not competent," he said amidst applause from his supporters, a few of whom screamed Ivanka Trump, at an election rally on Friday. "They're all saying, 'we want Ivanka'. I don't blame you," he said responding to his support-ers. This was Mr Trump's

first election rally after he

formally accepted the nomination of the nomination of the Republican Party on Thursday for the presidential election. Trump said Harris withdrew from the Democratic

Party's presidential race before primary season kicked off as her popularity dropped down to single "How about her? Sheer beauty? What a beauty though. They pick a woman who starts off...She (Harris) starts off (her presidential campaign) sort of strong. She's one of the favourites. Within a period of a few months, she goes down, down 15, 12, 11, nine, eight, five, three, two," he said. — *PTI*

Abe loyalist Suga may be next Japanese PM

Tokyo, Aug. 29: Yoshihide Suga, a long-time lieutenant of Japan's Shinzo Abe, has emerged as a strong contender to succeed him as Prime Minister, an out-come that would extend the fiscal and monetary stimulus that defined Abe's nearly eight years in office. Mr Abe said on Friday he was stepping down due to a worsening of a chronic illness, setting the stage for a leadership election within the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). While some other would-be successors have declared their intention



to run, the 71-year-old Suga has said he doesn't want the job. But such com-Yoshihide ments have been called into question

by an aggressive media push in recent days that put him squarely in the public eye. "They are really going to try to get Suga to replace Abe and continue the Abe govern-ment without Abe," said Sophia University professor Koichi Nakano.
— Reuters

■ More on Page 6

Zuckerberg as report alleges **FB-BJP link** AGE CORRESPONDENT

Cong writes to

NEW DELHI, AUG. 29

The Congress has written to Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg, the second time in a fortnight, asking for details of the steps being taken to investigate allegations that the social media giant does not apply hate speech rules to posts by BJP members. "We urge you to let us know what steps your company is planning to take to investigate these matters... will also be pursuing legislative and judicial actions in India to ensure a foreign company cannot continue to cause social disharmony in our nation," the letter said. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi too again launched a scathing attack over the BJP's alleged links with Facebook and

WhatsApp. Mr Gandhi "America's Time magazine exposes WhatsApp BJP nexus: Used by 40 Cr Indians, WhatsApp also wants to be used for making payments for which Modi Govt's approval is needed. Thus, BJP has a hold over WhatsApp."

The article in *Time*

magazine talks of how Facebook has failed to check hate speech, including some comments by BJP leaders.

The BJP took a swipe at the Opposition party, saying any organisation that does not work to its liking is accused of acting under BJP-RSS pres-

















Man and mother held in dowry death case

Noida: The husband and the mother-in-law of a woman, who was found dead at her inlaws' home in Greater Noida. have been arrested in an alleged dowry death case, police said Saturday. The arrests were made on Friday evening from Shadipur Chhidoli village after police registered an FIR on the basis of a complaint from the deceased woman's parents, they said. One of the family members had told police that she had woken up around 3 am to drink water when she found Musaida, 22, unusually lying on a cot in the terrace. Later, the family realised she was dead and the matter was reported to police at 6.00 am, according to officials. The local Badalpur police station officials said the death appeared to be mysterious and suggested some foul play as the body bore injury marks too. "Based on the complaint from the family of the deceased, Musaida's husband

Man hit by car,

Anno were arrested from their

Firoz, 24, and his mother

house on Friday," a police spokesperson said.

dragged on bonnet New Delhi: A motorcyclist was injured after being hit by a car and dragged on its bonnet in Delhi's Vikaspuri area, police said on Friday. The victim Chetan, a resident of Pankha Road, Uttam Nagar, was riding his motorcycle on Thursday night when he was hit by the car on Najafgarh Road, DCP (West) Deepak Purohit said. He along with the pillion rider confronted the car driver and the passenger identified as Durgesh Tiwari (31) and Karan Sethi (44), however, they refused to step out. Chetan then stood in front of the car in a bid to block its way and force the driver to come out, Purohit said. However, the driver

pressed the accelerator and hit Chetan who fell on the bonnet and grabbed the wipers while the vehicle started moving towards Janakpuri. Few minutes later, he lost grip, fell down and got stuck under the car but the driver refused to stop the vehicle and dragged him for around 150 metres even as Chetan cried for help

19 hurt at Muharram procession in J&K

■ Continued from Page 1

groups of people at a couple of places after they violated restrictions in force in parts of Srinagar in view of the Covid 19 and tried to take out tazia ignoring the appeals of the authorities to the contrary.

On Friday, the police detained dozens of Shia mourners to foil their repeated attempts to take out a tazia procession through the streets of uptown Srinagar. The authorities had on Friday dawn imposed restrictions under Section 144 CrPC on areas falling under eight police stations - Batamaloo, Shaheed Gunj, Karan Nagar, Maisuma, Kothi Bagh, Shergari, Krala Khud and Ram Munshi Bagh to

hold back tazia processions. commissioner, Kashmir's Pandurang K. Pole, on Thursday night announced a complete ban on holding of such rallies in view of the spike in Covid-19 deaths and positive cases in the Valley and urged the heads of religious organisations to use their influence and make people aware of the importance of fol-lowing Covid related SOPs including social distancing protocol and use of face masks while commemorating martyr-

dom of Imam Hussain. Several Shia religious organisations and leaders had earlier announced that no mass rallies, processions or congregations would be held this year to commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Hussain in view of Covid and appealed to the devotees to follow SOPs strictly while even holding restricted majalis (mourning assemblies) in their respective areas. However, such appeals were ignored in some areas including the central town of Budgam where the police used force to break up a large mourning procession on Wednesday. The authorities said that curfew-like restrictions being enforced in parts of Srinagar and some other towns including Budgam will be extended to more areas from Saturday midnight to hold back the tazia and zuljinah procession on Sunday, the 10th day of Muharram. An official ban remains in force on organising mourning rallies and sions along select traditional routes on the 8th and 10th day of Muharram, the first month of Islamic calendar, mainly in Srinagar ever since the separatist campaign became violent way back in 1989.

■ Paramilitary forces has proposed to check Aarogya Setu mobile app of commuters at stations

Multiple detectors, restricted entry to Metro: CISF

New Delhi, Aug. 29: Contactless frisking of passengers, who will go through multiple door-sized metal detectors, checking them for fever or flu-like symptoms and restricted entry into stations are among a slew of measures proposed by the CISF for the Delhi Metro, which may be re-opened in September after being shut for five months due to the Covid pandemic.

The paramilitary force that guards the metro network in the national capital region has prepared a fresh "business continuity plan" that will be implemented in "consultation" with the urban development ministry and the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC).

Encouraging commuters to download the Aarogya Setu mobile app and intensifying electronic and manual surveillance on all activities in metro premises have also been suggested by the force, besides several measures for maintaining social distancing.

The plan has been prepared to ensure that the health and security of metro staff and the passengers are not compromised and to enable a sound counter-terrorist cover during the Covid times in the over 230 stations of the rapid rail transport system often called the "lifeline" of Delhi-NCR.

The government is likely to allow the resumption of metro train services in the "Unlock 4" phase beginning September 1 and the Union home ministry is expected to issue the new guidelines any-



Construction workers stand in a queue for Covid test in New Delhi on Saturday. -PTI

As per the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) plan accessed by PTI, the force has proposed that the Aarogya Setu mobile app should be "checked of all commuters entering the sta-

A senior official said while the force has not stressed that the app should be mandatory, but passengers can be encouraged to download it for a hassle-free journey.

"Those who do not have the app due to any reason will also be allowed to use the metro," he said.

The app helps to ascertain the Covid health status of an individual, including if the person has been exposed to any

35% rise in demand for hospital beds in Delhi since July-end

New Delhi, Aug. 29: The rise in the number of Covid cases in the national capital has led to a 35 per cent increase in the demand for beds in hospitals in the city, according to government data.

On July 30, the occupancy of beds reserved for coronavirus patients was 18 per cent, with only 2,958 out of 16,038 beds being occupied.

It was 23.02 per cent on August 10 and 23.40 per cent on August 11. It increased to 28 per cent on Saturday, with 4,004 out of 14,135 beds occupied, according to data shared by the hospitals on Delhi Corona app.
Out of 1,229 Covid ICU beds with ventilator support, 473 (38 percent) were occupied. The occupancy was 33 per cent on July 30.

Delhi has recorded an increase in the number of new cases over the last few days, which experts attribute to the easing of lockdown curbs, complacency among people and return of migrants workers from neighboring states. The number of new cases hovered around 1,000 in the beginning of August -1,118 on August 1 and 961 on August 2.

Delhi records Aug.'s highest single-day spike of 1,840 cases

Total +ve cases 1,71,366, 15 deaths in 24 hrs

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, AUG. 29

With 1,954 new cases total patients count 1.7 lakh in the national capital. While the death toll from the disease rose to 4,404. in the last 24 hours, 15 deaths were recorded in the city. As cases continue to rise regularly for the last 10 days in the national capital, health experts advised that citizens must cooperate with the government's order and follow every possible precautionary measure while going out in public. They said now it should be the individual's responsibility to follow the rules and guidelines on their own.

According to the latest health bulletin released by the Delhi government, the total number of cases stood at 1,71,366, while the number of active cases stood at 14,040, of which 7,024 are in home

isolation. As many as 1,52,922 patients have either recovered, been discharged or have migrated out. The number of containment zones stands at 803. Positivity rate also dropped from earlier above 90 per cent to 89.23 per cent. 22,004 tests were conducted during the last 24 hours. Total

▶ AS CASES continue to rise regularly for the last 10 days in the national capital, health experts advised that citizens must cooperate with the government's order and follow every possible precautionary measure while going out in public

THE NUMBER of containment zones stands at 803. Positivity rate also dropped from earlier above 90%to 89.23

till date with 81,508 tests per million.

consultant, Senior microbiology, Sri Balaji Action Medical Institute Dr Jyoti Mutta explained that first of all people need to understand that the "unlock" was ordered due to economic reasons as a number of companies were facing a huge loss, jobs were affected and people's finances were deeply affected. "Government took this

step for our own good hence being citizens it was our duty from the very beginning to cooperate with the government's order and follow every possible precautionary measure while going out in public. Now it should be the individ-ual's responsibility to follow the rules and guide-

lines on their own. But it is unfortunate to see people not wearing masks, not maintaining social distancing etc. Coming back to daily routine life is the need of the hour but the risk is still not

nessed low rates by following precautionary measures with discipline, if people follow them again with discipline we will surely see positive

Dharamshila Narayana Superspeciality Hospital, Dr Navneet Sood said, "It is disappointing to see that a section of society is not practising social distancing and other safety measures in public. It is not that difficult to understand that this "unlock" is for the country's economic growth. It doesn't mean that risk is over and we can move in public places freely. We should not forget that asymptomatic infection can be far more dangerous as the person may not face any pain but he or she is still a carrier of the virus and one cannot judge who may be infect-

They highlighted that fighting for Covid free country is not possible without precautionary

DRI seizes gold worth ₹43 crore at rly station

New Delhi, Aug. 29: In a major catch, the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) has seized gold worth nearly ₹43 crore, smuggled into India from Myanmar, from eight men arrested at New Delhi railway station, officials said on Saturday.

As many as 504 gold bars, weighing 83.6 kg, have been recovered from the accused who hail from Sangli district in Maharashtra, they said. In a statement issued on

Saturday, the DRI said eight people were intercepted after their arrival at New Delhi railway station by Dibrugarh-New Delhi Rajdhani Express on Friday. The DRI officials seized

504 gold bars which were found to be concealed in specially tailored cloth vests worn by these eight passengers, it said.

"The carriers of the smuggled gold were found to be travelling on fake identity (Aadhar the statement said.

The intelligence inputs indicate that the recovered gold bars carrying foreign markings, had been smuggled into India from Myanmar through the international land border at Moreh in Manipur and the smuggling syndicate operating Guwahati was attempting to dispose of the contraband in Delhi. Kolkata and Mumbai seized 504 gold bars which were found to be concealed in specially tailored cloth vests worn by these eight passen-

dicate sourced and recruited poor and needy individuals from various parts of the country, to act as carriers of smuggled gold, by luring them with the prospect of quick and easy money

which have thriving markets for the yellow metal, the probe agency said.

"The smuggling syndicate sourced and recruited poor and needy individuals from various parts of the country, to act as carriers of smuggled gold, by luring them with the prospect of quick and easy money. The smugglers used air, land and rail routes to locally transport the smuggled gold," it said.

of 99.9 per cent purity and collectively weigh 83.621 kg. "The market value of the recovered contra-

band is close to ₹43

crore,"

the statement

The seized gold bars are

These eight carriers have been arrested and remanded to judicial custody, it added.

SC verdict tomorrow in Prashant Bhusan case

PARMOD KUMAR NEW DELHI, AUG. 29



the sentencof lawver Prashant Bhushan in a suo motu contempt case for his two tweets which the court had held lowered its dignity and authority and tended to destabilize it.

The top court bench comprising Justice Arun Mishra, Justice B.R.Gavai and Justice Krishna Murari had reserved the judgment on August 25 after a hearing in the wake of Bhushan refusing to tender an "unconditional apology" as was sought by the court by its August 20, 2020, order.

The sentence that will be given to Bhushan, however, will not come into effect immediately as the court had in the August 20 hearing "assured" that any sentence that will be pronounced on Bhushan will come into force only after his plea seeking the reconsideration (review) August 14 judgment holding him guilty of criminal contempt for his two tweets is decided.

Bhushan has yet to file a review petition, as per Supreme Court rules he had 30 days time starting from August 14 to file the



A traffic police constable inspects a caved-in portion of a road after heavy rains at Shrimant Madhavrao Scindia Marg in New Delhi on Saturday.

Court grants bail to man in 2 cases, says nothing on record against him

granted bail to a man in two separate cases related to northeast Delhi violence, saying no public witnesses or CCTV footage have come on record to show that he was involved in rioting and chanting slogans against other community.

Chief metropolitan magistrate Purushottam Pathak granted bail to Sunil Sharma in two cases of rioting in Bhajanpura area on furnishing a bail bond of ₹20,000 and a surety of like amount in each case.

"In the present case, nothing has come on record such as any public witness, CCTV footage or

New Delhi, Aug. 29: A any video recording to court here on Saturday show the presence of applicant/accused (Sharma) on the spot and that he was involved in rioting and chanting slogans against other community. No recovery has been effected from him,' the court said in its similar order passed in the

> The court directed Sharma to join the investigation and not to tamper with evidence or influence any witness in any manner in the cases It also said Sharma

two cases.

should maintain peace and harmony in the society and appear before the court on each and every date of hearing to attend the proceedings

through video conferencing, advocate Rajendra Kasana, said Sharma, who was in custody since April, has been falsely implicated in the cases.

Kasana further claimed that Sharma has not been named in the FIR and nothing has been recovered from him.

Special Prosecutor Rajiv Krishan Sharma, appearing for the state, opposed the bail plea, saying Sharma, while a member of a member of unlawful assembly, allegedly indulged in looting, arsoning, damaging public and private properties.

Delhi Police' 'IT cell' to flag 'unlawful content' on social media

New Delhi, Aug 29: As outcome, we will take it part of a pilot project, the Delhi Police is planning to set up an "IT cell" to flag "unlawful content' on social media that may have the potential to disrupt the law-and-order situation, officials said on Saturday.

They said the project will start once they receive an approval from the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) but for now, they have been allocated ₹25 lakh for it.

"We are in the process of setting up an IT cell, which would start as a pilot project for three months and based on its

forward, but for now, we are awaiting the approval of the MHA," a senior police officer said.

The officer added that the aim is to flag unlawful content on social media, which may cause communal disharmony or affect the law-and-order situation, and take appropriate action against it.

Most of those hired for the pilot project are qualified youngsters, well-versed with social media platforms and have a background in information technology. Some of them are pursuing their masters degree. These people

POLICE SAID the project will start once they receive an approval from the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) but for now, they have been allocated ₹25 lakh for it

have been a hired on a contract basis, the police said. According to police, senior officers also realised the importance of setting up an IT cell during the Northeast Delhi riots, when some unknown users, including from Pakistan, posted fake "alerts" about the riots and tagged Delhi Police to

"tarnish their image". "And before the riots, activists and students coordinated where to gather by sharing messages on social media. Most of the time, officers in districts or the special branch got to know only a few hours before the gathering," a

senior officer said. An official said the issue was also discussed a few months ago by the Delhi Police Commissioner with other officers and initially it was proposed to hire a consultant from a public sector undertaking for a particular peri-"After several rounds discussion, it was

decided to hire a private consultant, following government rules," the officer said. Later, a tender was float-

ed and the consultant was asked to shortlist people for an interview. "100 people were shortlisted after their resumes were scanned from online job portals; they appeared for an online interview with senior officers of the Special Branch. They were asked about their perception of the Delhi Police, their point of view over the police action during the riots, and what they would do if they got the job," an officer said.

Out of the 100, 15-17 people were shortlisted. Two of them, who will be given the designation of "perception manager", will lead the team, said police.

"They were recently called to the police HQ, where the police chief met them and conveyed that the force needs a strong presence on all social media platforms to counter misleading information by anti-social elements. Apart from working under the special branch, they have been asked to coordinate with Delhi spokesperson," the officer

over," said Dr Mutta. Health experts pointed out that some areas wit-

change. Pulmonary consultant

ed or not.'

India's Covid-19 recovery go past 26 lakh, **death rate drops**

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, AUG. 29

India on Saturday once again recorded the highest fresh cases in a single day after 76.472 new patients were detected with the novel coronavirus infection. With this spike. India's overall Covid tally moved closer to 35 lakh as per COVID19India.org ures. It was 34.64 lakh as per union health ministry data till Saturday

morning.
The death toll due to the disease has now reached 62,550 after 1,021 people succumbed to the virus in the last 24 hours though as per COVID19India.org the overall death toll was close to 63000 by evening. However, the health ministry said the Covid case fatality rate has dropped

to 1.81 per cent.

The number of recover ies has increased substantially with about 26.5 lakh people getting discharged from medical caretaking the recovery rate to 76.47 per cent. In the last 24 hours, 65,050 persons were declared fit. However, there are still 7.52 lakh active cases in the country currently which account for 21.72 per cent of the total case-

Health ministry officials said that a signifi-cant feature of India's management of COVID-19 cases is the growing rate of recovered patients. "The Recovery Rate of India is following a continuous upward incline whereas the Case Fatality Rate is constantly declining," they said. According to officials, the global comparison depicts that India has one of the lowest cases per

million (2424) and deaths per million (44) compared to the global average of 3161 and 107.2, respectively. Eight states — Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Odisha and Telangana — contribute to around 73% of the active caseload, as of today. Moreover, seven states — Maharashtra, Delhi, Tamil Nadu, Pradesh, Andhra Karnataka,

Pradesh and West Bengal - account for 81% of the total deaths.

SHORT TAKES

Sakshi Maharaj put

in 14-day isloation

Giridih (Jharkhand): BJP MP Sakshi Maharaj was forcibly home quarantined here on Saturday for 14-day for violat-ing Covid-19 norms, a senior district official said. The MP from Uttar Pradesh had come to Giridih, over 200 km from Ranchi, to take part in a programme from Unnao via Dhanbad. Maharaj, who was returning to Dhanbad by road to take a train to Delhi, was intercepted by the district administration near Pirtand police station and sent on quarantine at Shanti Bhawan ashram, where he had gone to take part in a programme, **Deputy Commissioner Rahul** Kumar Sinha said. The action been taken in accordance with a state government order of 14 days quarantine for people coming from outside, the DC said. "He had not informed the state government about his visit and therefore we have put him in quarantine for 14 days," Mr Sinha said. — PTI

Madras HC to start

physical hearing

Chennai: The Madras high court on Saturday decided to resume physical hearing of cases from September 7 "in order to meet the growing demand" for physical court hearing. The court will also continue with the virtual hearing and will have staggered physical hearings to avoid overcrowding in the courts, a notification from the Madras high court registrar general said. "In order to meet the growing demand of physical court hearing and also keeping view the precautions that are required to be observed for avoiding any untoward happening, Hon'ble Administrative Committee on serious consideration has decided to open physical court hearing partially," it said. The Committee has decided to open physical hearing partially with six division benches at the Principal seat here and two at Madurai. — PTI

Woman buries hubby

under bedroom, held

Agartala: A woman allegedly killed her husband and buried him in their house in Bhaktikumarpara in Dhalai district of Tripura, police said on Saturday. The accused, 21year-old Bharati buried Sanjit Reang (30) under the mud floor of their bedroom and fled to a nearby village on Thursday night, they said. Acting on a tip off, police searched the house and recovered the body of the deceased, and arrested the woman from the village. The couple often got into quarrels, a police officer said. Superintendent of Police. Dhalai district, Kishore Debbarma said an FIR was registered in this connection and investigation is underway. During routine procedure, the accused tested pos-itive for Covid-19. — PTI

Bihar: Cong MLA Ramdeo Rai dies

Patna/Begusarai: Veteran Congress leader, multiple term Bihar MLA and former Lok Sabha member Ramdeo Rai, who had caused ripples in the 1980s when he defeated socialist heavyweight Karpoori Thakur in an electoral contest, died here on Saturday. The 81-year-old sitting MLA from Bachhwara in Begusarai district, breathed his last at a private hospital in Patna, where he had been admitted for a few months and suffered a cardiac arrest in the morning, party sources said. Condoling his demise, chief minister Nitish Kumar remembered Rai as a "sweet natured, soft-spoken and simple" political leader whose death felt to him like "personal loss". Rai had reg-

3 minors killed in **UP house collapse**

istered his maiden electoral

polls. — PTI

victory in the 1972 Assembly

Fatehpur (UP): Three children were killed and six others injured here on Saturday after the roof of their thatched house collapsed due to rains, police said. The incident occurred at around 4.30 pm in Ratva Khera village. Sunil Pal's three children, Shishupal (2), Sabhajeet (5) and Gudhia (15), died on the spot, while six other family members were injured. SHO of the Bindki police station Satyendra Singh said. Police pulled out the injured from the debris with the help of villagers. - PTI

■ 'Tunnel had sandbags with markings of Karachi and Shakargarh'

J&K tunnel 'handiwork of Pak': BSF

Jammu, Aug. 29: A top BSF official said on Saturday that a major underground tunnel that was found in Samba, originating from Pakistan, was constructed with the knowledge and "hand" of the neighbouring nation.

The remarks of BSF Inspector General (Jammu frontier) N.S. Jamwal came after the Border Security Force (BSF) detected a tunnel just beneath the Indo-Pak international border fence in Galar area of

He lauded the force personnel for their alertness in detecting the tunnel and said, "We were getting information that a tunnel was dug out from the Pakistan side in Samba. We were working on the information when one of our teams managed to locate it on Friday evening.

Mr Jamwal, who rushed to inspect the tunnel on Saturday morning, told reporters that it was dug out from Pakistan side and was over 150 metres inside the Indian territory.

The tunnel's opening was properly reinforced with "Karachi and

YUSUF JAMEEL

SRINAGAR, AUG. 29

(NC)'s high-power politi-

cal affairs committee met

here on Friday to discuss

the overall political situa-

tion prevailing in Jammu

and Kashmir and chalk

out strategy towards seek-

ing restoration of its spe-

cial status and statehood.

The meeting, the first held since the Centre

abrogated Article 370 and

bifurcated J&K into two

Union Territories (UTs) in

August last year, autho-

rised its president and for-mer chief minister Farooq Abdullah to gar-

ner support for "Gupkar Declaration" beyond its

On August 4, 2019, the leaders of J&K's regional

parties, including NC and

People's Democratic Party

(PDP) and their allies in Congress and CPIM, had

met at Mr Abdullah's resi-

dence along Srinagar's

Gupkar Road and signed a

joined statement named

as "Gupkar Declaration"

through which they vowed to protect the spe-

signatories.

Conference



BSF personnel stand near the mouth of a hidden tunnel after it was found along the India-Pakistan border in Jammu and Kashmirs Samba region on Saturday.

Shakargarh", clearly indicating that it was dug out from Pakistan side and

ended here, he said. The IG said the preliminary investigation revealed that it was a freshly dug tunnel.

There is a hand and knowledge of Pakistan establishment in such

Farooq to garner support

for return of J&K Art 370

Abdullah's party to push its demand 'tooth and nail'

National Conference president Farooq Abdullah and party

vice-president Omer Abdulla attend the party's first-ever

meeting after abrogation of Article 370 at the party head-

quarter Nawa-e-Subha in Srinagar on Saturday.

Peoples

Conference,

Declaration

Congress

Awami

cial status, identity and

autonomy of J&K and

fight tooth and nail

Last week, the leaders of

attempts to split it up.

and

issued a joint statement

here saying that they are "wholly bound" by the

and "will unwaveringly

that its political affairs

The NC said on Saturday

Conference,

National

Gupkar

kind of construction," Mr Jamwal said.

Meanwhile, in a statement, the BSF said the tunnel was unearthed in a special anti-tunnelling drive which was launched all along the IB in Jammu region in view of the prevailing security scenario in

3 militants, Army jawan

AGE CORRESPONDENT SRINAGAR, AUG. 29

Hours after the security forces gunned down four Al-Barq Mujahedin militants and captured a fifth one in Jammu and Kashmir's southern Shopian district on Friday evening, a similar fire fight occurred in neighbouring Pulwama leaving three more militants dead. One Army jawan was also killed in the second clash,

"During the search operation, as the pres-ence of terrorists got ascertained they were given the opportunity to surrender. However, they fired indiscriminately upon the joint search party, which was retaliatleading encounter,"

spokesman said. He added that the three Hizb-ul-Mujahideen cadres killed in the clash have been identified as Adil Hafiz, Arshid Ahmed Dar and Rouf Ahmed Mir — all residents of Pulwama.

killed in J&K encounter

the officials said here.
A spokesman of J&K

police said on Saturday that its counterinsur-gency Special Operations Group (SOG) together with the Army's 50 Rashtriya Rifles and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)'s 182 and 183 Battalions launched a cordon-and-search operation in Pulwama Zadoora village overnight.

ings of Jhansi-based Rani

Modi: Farming will

be taught in schools

'Efforts on to introduce Agriculture in rural schools'

There is a need to take knowledge related to agriculture and its practical application to school level. Efforts are (on) to introduce the Agriculture subject at middle school level in villages.

- Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

Lakshmi Bai Central Agricultural University. The NEP approved by the Union Cabinet last month replaces the 34-year-old National Policy on Education and is aimed at paving the way transformational reforms in school and higher education systems to make India a global

knowledge superpower. Asserting that steady efforts are being made to connect farming with modern technology, the Prime Minister noted that research institutions and agricultural universities have a vital role to play.

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

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

local farmers.

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

Bundelkhand to get ₹10Kcr water projects

New Delhi, Aug. 29: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said the government is committed to the development of droughtprone Bundelkhand region and around 500 projects worth over ₹10,000 crore have been sanctioned for improving water availabili-

New Delhi, Aug. 29: Prime

on Saturday pitched for

taking farm education to middle school level, say-

ing necessary reforms have been made in this

regard in the National Education Policy (NEP)

"There is a need to take knowledge related to agri-culture and its practical

application to school

level. Efforts are (on) to

introduce the Agriculture

subject at middle school level in villages," Modi

This will develop agri-

culture related under-

standing in students and

enable them to give infor-

mation about agriculture. its modern farming tech-

niques and marketing, to

their family members, he said, adding this will pro-

mote agro-entrepreneur-

ship in the country.
"For this, many reforms

have been made in the

Policy," Modi said in an

address after the virtual

inauguration of college and administration build-

Education

Observing that the benefit of water from three rivers, Ken, Betwa and Yamuna, was not reaching the Bundelkhand region, Mr Modi said the proposed Ken-Betwa river linking project has the potential to change the fortune of the area and the Centre is in discussion with both Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh on this

He was addressing after the virtual inauguration of college and administration buildings of Jhansi-based Rani Lakshmi Bai Central Agricultural University. Both the Centre and the

UP government are committed towards development of Bundelkhand region and restore its historic identity and past glory," Mr Modi

The Prime Minister men-

Modi said the government is committed to the development of droughtprone Bundelkhand region and around 500 projects worth over ₹10,000 crore have been sanctioned for improving water availability.

MINISTER NARENDRA

tioned that before the 2019 general polls, he had promised to improve water availability in the Bundelkhand region in the next five years and several initiatives have been taken in that regard.

"Due to their blessings, Har Ghar Jal Abhiyan (Tap water to every rural household) is working at a fast pace. Construction of water bodies and laying of pipelines in all districts are underway The government has already sanctioned over ₹10,000 crore for 500 water projects for this purpose, he said. Of these, the work on projects worth nearly ₹3.000 crore has commenced in the last two months.

"When these projects get completed, lakhs of families in this region will directly benefit," he said.

PM: Modern tech helped stop locusts

New Delhi, Aug. 29: India has controlled the spread crop-threatening migratory pest desert locusts by using advanced technologies, including drones, and ensured there was not much crop damage, Narendra Modi said on

Saturday.
In his address after the virtual inauguration of college and administration buildings of Jhansi-based Rani Lakshmi Bai Central Agricultural University, the prime minister stressed on the need to promote greater use of latest technologies in the farm sector.

More than 10 states, including Uttar Pradesh, faced locust problem in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, he said adding that the Bundelkhand region faced the locust attack after 30 years.

Sharing how modern tecnnologies are neipiul in addressing the challenges faced by the farm sector, Mr Modi said.

Bengal govt writes to Railway for

metro to run

Kolkata, Aug. 29: The West Bengal government has written a letter to the Railway Board, stating that metro and local train services can be resumed in a limited manner in the state but with all health safety protocols.

The government also requested the board to put in place the required logistics for smooth operations of the services

In a letter to the Railway Board chair-man, state Home Secretary Alapan Bandyopadhyay said, "This is to bring to your Bandyopadhyay notice that state government is of the view that metro and local train services can be resumed in Bengal in a limited manner maintaining the norms of physical distancing and health

hygiene protocols.'

Before resumption of the services, the required modalities and logistics to ensure smooth operation may be worked out in consultation with the state government, the letter, sent to the board on Friday, said. West Bengal chief Mamata minister Banerjee Wednesday said her government is willing to allow one-fourth of suburban trains services and full Metro Railway services with adequate safety

protocols, including social distancing from

September 1.



MANOJ ANAND **GUWAHATI, AUG. 29**

A day after doling out appointment letters to 5,319 teachers for primary schools, Assam education minister Himanta Biswa Sarma here on Saturday announced that all schools across the state will reopen from September 1. However, for the first 15 days, the teachers will focus on sanitisation of their respective school premises and informal classes will start from September 15. Moreover,

Chandigarh, Aug. 29: A 58-year-old man said to be

a relative of cricketer Suresh Raina died while

four members of his fam-

ily sustained injuries

allegedly in an attack by

robbers, police said on

The deceased has been identified as Ashok Kumar, a government

The incident took place at Thariyal village in Punjab's Pathankot dis-

trict on the night inter-

vening August 19 and 20,

According to them, three to four members of

Kale

notorious

Kachhewala gang had come with an intention to

loot, attacked Ashok Kumar and his family

members at their house

Saturday.

Cricketer Raina's kin

killed in 'robbery bid'

house.

police.

the government will also arrange free masks for the students.

committee which met at

the party headquarters

here with Mr. Abdullah in

chair held a threadbare discussion on "unilateral,

undemocratic and uncon-

Government of India and

its impact on the ground level in J&K". While all its

members from the Valley

those from Jammu region

and Kargil participated in

it via a video link, a party

stitutional

undertaken

attended

spokesman said.

measures

meeting.

Informing that teachers who has tested negative in mandatory Covid-19 tests will start coming to schools from September 1, Mr Sarma told reporters that they have decided to carry out massive sanitisation of the school premises. "We have also decided to allot a fund to the schools for sanitisation of schools," said the minister adding that education department is also going release Standard Procedure Operating

in Thariyal village near

Madhopur of Pathankot.

At the time of the

attack, they were sleeping

at the terrace of their

Ashok Kumar, who had

suffered head injuries,

died while four others

sustained injuries, said

Kumar's death was also

confirmed by Pathankot

Senior Superintendent of

Police Gulneet Singh Khurana. As far as Kumar's relation with

cricketer Raina, the SSP

said he has no confirma-

tion about it. He may be a

We are investigating the

According to police, rob-

bers decamped with some

cash and gold from the

relative, he said.

matter, said the SSP.

(SOP) that will have to be followed by all the government schools

minister said, "From September onwards, the students of primary schools and upper primary schools will also be given mid-day meals and one week's question paper and study material. Next week, their papers will be checked in front of them.'

He however clarified informal classes that would start September 15 but in case of outbreak of Covid-19, they will close the school

immediately. He said that teachers doing online classes from their home so far have to do the same

from their work places. It is significant that Assam government has also announced to recruit more than 10 thousand teachers next monthg. Mr Sarma made this declaration while doling out appointment letters to 5319 upper and lower primary teachers at a grand ceremony in Guwahati that was held in the presence of Assam chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal

on Friday.



Women play soccer at Brigade Parade Ground during

- PTI

Nadda meet MPs from Bihar, asks them to be active

MPs asked to visit at least 60 panchayats AGE CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI, AUG. 29

BJP president J.P. Nadda on Saturday met party MPs from both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha from Bihar at the party headquarters to review the party's preparedness for the coming crucial assembly polls in the state.

The BJP, which is a junior coalition partner in the state government led by chief minister Nitish Kumar JD(U), has asked its MPs to visit atleast 60 panchayats, two each day, not in their own constituencies to meet people and also work to ensure the victory of NDA candidates, whether it is of their own party or alliance partners JD(U) and LJP.

Mr Nadda had recently announced that the NDÅ will go to polls under the leadership of Nitish Kumar and exuded confidence that the ruling coalition will retain power. Bihar will be the first state that will go to polls in October-November amid global pandemic Covid-19.

While Mr Nadda is likely to visit the state in the second week of next former month. Maharashtra chief minister Devendra Fadnavis, who is likely to get a key role in the election committee, is expected to visit Patna on September 6,



when the BJP could officially start the seat sharing talks with allies.

During the meeting, BJP MPs were asked to address atleast one virtual rally at Shakti Kendras (booths) and reach out to as many prominent people in a every district, highlighting central government and state gov-ernment's achievements. BJP MPs have also been asked to observe Prime Minister Narendra Modi birthday on September 17 as 'Seva Divas' and the anniversary of ideologue Deen birth party Upadhyaya next month in a big way. For the Prime Minister's monthly radio pro-gramme Mann Ki Baat in September, BJP leaders have been asked to make sure that arrangements are made at every booth in the state for the karyakartas and locals, while keeping in mind the and guidelines against Covid-19.

SHORT TAKES

'Run Kolkata Metro,

local train services'

Kolkata: The West Bengal government has written a letter to the Railway Board, stating that Metro and local train services can be resumed in a limited manner in the state but with all health safety protocols. The government also requested the board to put in place the required logistics for smooth operations of the services. In a letter to the Railway Board chairman, state home secretary Alapan Bandyopadhyay said: "The state government is of the view that Metro and local train services can be resumed in Bengal in a limited manner maintaining the norms of physical distancing and health hygiene protocols." Before resumption of the services, the required modalities and logistics to ensure smooth operation may be worked out in consultation with the state government, the letter, sent to the board on Friday, said.

Army officer duped of ₹1.41cr online

Jammu: An Army officer here was duped of ₹1.41 crore by five people posing as Union finance ministry officials, the crime branch said on Saturday. The fivemember gang of cyber fraudsters lured the officer, Lt Col. Sardar Singh Smotra of Gandhi Nagar area of Jammu, into investing in a Canadian-based fund company with assured return of ₹10 crore at the time of maturity 16 years later, it said. A case was registered against the fraudsters after an inquiry into the complaint of the officer prima facie established that he was duped of the huge amount of money, it said in a statement here. The accused have been identified as Vivek Kumar, Shyam Pal and

ED raids Chinese

Pushpendar, all residents of

Uttar Pradesh, and Jagdish

Chander Sharma and Jaikant Kumar, both of Delhi. — PTI

betting apps firms New Delhi: The Enforcement Directorate has frozen four HSBC Bank accounts containing ₹46.96 crore after it raided multiple premises of companies involved in run-ning online Chinese betting apps, according to an official statement. It said the searches were carried out at 15 locations in Delhi, Gurgaon, Mumbai and Pune on Friday under various sections of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) "Searches were conducted on the registered offices of the companies, their directors and chartered accountants involved in illegally running online betting apps from websites which are hosted from outside India," the federal probe agency

Tusker electrocuted

said in the statement on Saturday. — PTI

at MP reserve forest

Umaria, MP: A female elephant died of electrocution in Panpadha sanctuary of Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve (BTR) in Madhya Pradesh on Saturday, an official said. The incident took place in the early hours of the day when the tusker came in contact with a high-voltage electricity line passing through Gangital beat, forest sub-divisional officer (SDO) Anil Kumar Shukla said. The pachyderm was part of a herd that was passing by the banks of a pond when the incident occurred, he said. Power lines are at a low height here and the power company has already been intimated about this, he added. The elephant's remains were cremated as per norms. — PTI

Baby girl sold by grandma for ₹1.1L

Karimnagar, Telangana: A woman in Karimnagar district of Telangana allegedly sold her infant granddaughter for ₹1.10 lakh, police said on Saturday. According to police the infant's father got married about three years ago. He was living in Hyderabad with his wife. The man's wife gave birth to a baby girl one month ago and she was staying at her mother's place at Veenavanka in the district, they said. After coming to know about the matter, the infant's father complained to the state government's child welfare committee on Friday. Efforts were on to arrest the grandmother and the alleged

'90% applicants want to take NEET, JEE test'

Mamata 'ruining' future of aspiring students: BJP neta

Siliguri/Kolkata, Aug. 29: Senior BJP leader Kailash Vijayvargiya on Saturday claimed that 90 per cent of the applicants from West Bengal are willing to sit for the NEET and the JEE examinations and accused Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee of "ruining" their future.
Banerjee has demanded

that the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) and the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) be postponed due to the COVID-19 situation.

"Even though other non-BJP ruled states are demanding the deferment of the exams, they have also made necessary arrangements for conducting them.

'The West Bengal government, however, has not made any such arrange-ment and is opposing the conduct of the examina-tions just for the sake of it. It is playing with the future of the students," Vijayvargiya, the BJP's national general secretary, told reporters at Bagdogra airport near

Vijayvargiya

'India keen to

play key role

management'

AGE CORRESPONDENT

major developments in

science and technology

with a view to play a

major global role in terms of economy and

disaster risk manage-

Disclosing this, minister of state for home

affairs, Nityanand Rai,

said Prime Minister Narendra Modi had already drafted a 10-

point agenda for this

purpose with special

focus on sectors like sci-

ence and technology along with developing a network of universities

with special focus on dis-

aster related issues to

work on climate risk

Speaking at the vale-

International

dictory programme of

Science & Technology

Conference organised by

the National Institute of

Disaster Management (NIDM) and Department

of Science & Technology

(DST) Mr Rai expressed

faith in the talent and

development of science

and technology in our country and said that the

motive of technological

advancements should be

to reach to the last mile

connectivity and every

needy person in our motherland. Mr Rai addressed the session

through a video confer-

While appreciating the efforts of the NIDM and Department of Science

and Technology, the min-

ister said they had man-

aged to bring best minds

together at one platform

to think together, speak

together and arrive at

looming and burning

questions pertaining to

disaster resiliency of

our country and to foster science and technology

applications towards the

vision of the Prime

various

solutions of

MUMBAI, AUG. 29

Rajput suicide.

Rajput's father. She was

escorted to the DRDO

guest house by a team of

Mumbai police. The CBI also questioned others in

connection with the sui-

management.

is working on

NEW DELHI, AUG. 29

India

ment.

in disaster

THE WEST Bengal govt is playing with the future of the students, Kailash Vijayvargiya, the BJP's national general secretary, told reporters at Bagdogra airport near

Bengal education minister Partha Chatterjee launched a fresh salvo against his Central counterpart Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank', tweeting, "Amid this global pandemic, @DrRPNishank can you guarantee safety of nearly

30 lakh students who have

registered for JEE & NEET

alleged that the chief minister was leading the state to the path of political violence ahead of the 2021

Assembly elections. His allegation came after Banerjee, also the Trinamul Congress supremo, gave a "do or die" call against the BJP-led government at the Centre, vowing to give a "taste of freedom" to the entire country by defeating the saffron party's "political

epidemic" in the 2021 Assembly polls in West

She had made the statement while addressing a virtual rally of the TMC Chhatra Parishad, the students' wing of the ruling party in West Bengal, in Kolkata on Thursday.

"People of West Bengal believe in democracy, while Mamata Banerjee believes in violence. If we come to power, political violence will end," Vijayvargiya, the saffron party's central observer for the state, said. Meanwhile, West Bengal

minister Chatterjee education launched a fresh salvo against his Central counterpart Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank', tweeting "Amid this global pandem tweeting, ic, @DrRPNishank can you guarantee safety of nearly 30 lakh students who have registered for JEE & NEET exams?

"With the transport system still not fully operational, why do you want to jeopardise their future so desperately? Immediately postpone the exams!" he demanded. — PTI

KPCC chief regrets his comments on Tharoor

AGE CORRESPONDENT T'PURAM, AUG. 29

Congress chief whip in Lok Sabha and working president of Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee Kodikkunnil Suresh has expressed regret over his "guest artiste" jibe against Shashi Tharoor. Suresh said his

words were not meant for hurting or belittling Tharoor and he had only expressed his annoyance against the letter written by 23 leaders to Sonia Gandhi on the organiza-tion revamp. The Congress MP from Mavellikkara who is also one of the senior most dalit leaders in Congress, expressed regret after facing wide-spread criticism in social "If he feels hurt by my

ANIMESH SINGH

NEW DELHI, AUG. 29

Six years after the Swachch Bharat Kosh (SBK) was set up by the Prime Minister Narendra

Modi in September 2014 to

achieve the target of a "clean India" by October 2019, the Jal Shakti min-

istry now wants direct administration of the

cleanliness fund, and has

sought Union Cabinet's

nod for the purpose.
When Mr Modi had announced the launch of

Swachch Bharat Mission

(SBM) during his first

Independence Day speech on August 15, 2014, the establishment of SBK was

approved by the Union Cabinet on September 4,

2014. The fund was set up

to attract contributions

from corporate social responsibility (CSR) capital of companies as well as

philanthropists to achieve

the aforementioned objec-

tive. The Centre even offers



K. Suresh with stand taken by him on various issues,' Mr Suresh added. A sec-Youth Congress leaders had also come out in support of Mr Tharoor.

In a Facebook post, Mr Suresh said the crux of the criticism against Tharoor was related to his views against Congress party's well stated posi-tions. "We have differences over the manner in which he takes stand on various issues without discussing in party fora. But the criticism should not be construed as personal differences because these are

Jal shakti ministry wants direct

control of Swachch Bharat fund

THE JAL Shakti ministry

last month moved a cabi-

net note for seeking to

shift the administrative

control of SBK under its

jurisdiction, and com-

been invited

ments from all the con-

cerned departments have

tax rebate to contributors

administration in the form

of a secretariat was hand-

ed over to the Department

of Expenditure under the

Though the SBK was

formed to release funds to

states for undertaking works related to drinking

water and sanitation, the

finance ministry's nod is

needed for releasing funds

While states' proposals

are invited by the Department of Drinking

Water and Sanitation of

the Union Jal Shakti

Ministry, it has to seek

Finance Ministry.

from SBK.

Seperate teams questioning suspects to weed out discrepancies

SBK. However its



(NDRF) teams have already been pressed into service to rescue the people in flood-hit areas" Hosangabad divisional commissioner Rajnish Srivastav said. Chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan made an survey Hosangabad to assess the flood situation in the area. Road communications at several places in the state have been cut off due to flash floods in various rivers in the state trig-

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY BHOPAL, AUG. 29

Army has been called in to

rescue people in the marooned areas in

Hosangabad district fol-lowing flash floods in Narmada caused by heavy

downpour in the region in

the last 24 hours. The river

was flowing 9 ft above its

danger level in the district.

"Army has been called in to evacuate people in

marooned areas in the dis-

trict. Besides, National

Disaster Response Force

gered by torrential rains

approval for getting the

state government's proj-

ects cleared and for getting

the funds from SBK

sources privy to develop-ments, the Jal Shakti

Ministry wants direct con-

trol of the secretariat of

the SBK on the grounds

that this would simplify

the process of getting the

funds and projects pro-

posed by states cleared in

the larger interest of

achieving the objective of

Swachch Bharat. It says

that once the control of the

fund falls under it, the sys-

tem of clearing projects and issuing funds for them

Subsequently the Jal

Shakti ministry last month

moved a cabinet note for

seeking to shift the admin-

istrative control of SBK

under its jurisdiction, and

comments from all the con-

cerned departments have

been invited for the same.

would get simplified.

according

released.

Now,

Pradesh's



Family members of Army martyr Prashant Sharma mourn his death at their residence in Muzaffarnagar of Uttar

AGE CORRESPONDENT BHOPAL, AUG. 29

■ Narmada flows 9 ft above danger level

Army called in to rescue

A man perched atop a tree for nearly 24 hours in a marooned island in a Madhya Pradesh district was on Saturday rescued by a helicopter. Madhu Kahar (31), resident of Belkhada village in Chhindwara district, had on Friday morning gone for fishing along with his friends to the nearby island formed by Pench

The island was completely submerged when water from Machgaon dam was released, leaving him and his friends

in the last 36 hours. Road communications between Bhopal and Sagar and Narasinghpur and Chhindwara have been cut off as flooded Narmada breached bridges and national highways at sev-

stranded there. While his friends swam to safety, he climbed a tree in the marooned island to prevent him from being washed away by the flood water.

A team of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) team rushed to the area after receiving reports on the plight of the man. The NDRF team however could not approach him due to high current of water in the area. Later, he was airlifted by a chopper", the state revenue control room here said quoting reports from Chhindwara district

eral places in the region. Red alert has been issued

collector's office.

for four districts and orange alert has been issued for 11 other districts in the state by India Meteorological Department (IMD) which predicted heavy to very heavy rainfall in these districts in the coming 48



BJP workers ring bell and clank utensils during a protest outside Datta temple at Karad in Maharashtra demanding reopening of all religious places in the state on

'August gets 25% more rain; highest in 44 years'

New Delhi, Aug. 29: India has received the highest rainfall in the month of August in the last 44 years, IMD data shows, as several parts of the country have witnessed floods.

Until August 28, the month recorded a 25-per cent surplus rainfall. It has also surpassed the previous highest rainfall in August, which was recorded in 1983. In that year, August had recorded a 23.8-per cent excess rainfall.

The Meteorological Department (IMD) data shows that in August 1976, the country had recorded a 28.4-per cent excess rainfall.

The country has so far recorded nine-per cent more rainfall than normal. Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Goa have recorded excess rainfall while Sikkim has recorded a large excess. Many states have seen floods after the swelling of rivers.

welling or river.
According to the Water Commission (CWC), the overall storage position of the reservoirs in the country till August 27 is better than the corresponding period of last year. It is also better than the average storage of the last 10 years during the corresponding period, the CWC said.

"Better than normal storage" is available in the basins of the Ganga, Narmada, Tapi, Mahi, Sabarmati, the rivers of Godavari, Krishna, Mahanadi and the neighbouring east-flowing rivers, Cauvery and the neighbouring east-flowing rivers and west-flowing rivers of south India, the CWC

The Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, Manipur, Mizoram and Nagaland have recorded a deficient rainfall. The official rainfall season in the country is from June 1 to September 30.

IIT-Indore teaches ancient sciences, maths in Sanskrit

Indore, Aug. 29: The Indian Institute of Technology here introduced a unique course to impart mathematical and scientific knowledge from ancient texts in Sanskrit, an official said on Saturday.

Titled "Understanding Classical Scientific Texts of India in an Immersive Sanskrit Environment". the course was started to expose the present generation to ancient knowledge, the official from the institute said.

The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)-sponsored quality improvement programme began on August 22 and will continue till October 2 with a total of 62 hours of online classes,

750 candidates from all over the world

TITLED 'UNDERSTAND-**ING** Classical Scientific Texts of India in an Immersive Sanskrit Environment', the course was started to expose

The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)-sponsored qualitv improvement programme began on August 22 and will continue till October 2.

the present generation

to ancient knowledge.

were participating in the course, he added. "Ancient texts of India, originally composed in Sanskrit, have a rich heritage of mathematical and scientific knowledge and the present generation is unaware of this. We started this course to make

them aware of

ancient knowledge Sanskrit itself," said professor Neelesh Kumar, officiating director of IIT, Indore. The course will inspire

participants to research, innovate, study and teach mathematics and science in Sanskrit, he said

According to an IIT official, the course has been divided into two parts, under which participants will first be taught the nuances of Sanskrit to build their understanding of the language and in the next part, they will be taught classical mathe-

matics in Sanskrit.

A qualifying examination will also be conducted to evaluate the participants involved in the second part of the course and successful candidates will be awarded a certificate, he added.

cide on Saturday. purchaser, police added. The officials had grilled



more than 10 hours in connection with her monetary details and bank transactions. The CBI also questioned Rajput's flat-mate Siddharth Pithani, cook Neeraj Singh, domestic help Keshav, manager Samual Miranda and

CBI quizzes Rhea for 2nd day in row accountant Rajat Mewati

Seperate teams are questioning the suspects to weed out discrepancies in the sequence of incidents. Rajpuť's father has accused Chakraborty of allegedly swindling at least ₹15 crore from the actor's bank account. The ED is hence studying the monetary transactions of

Chakraborty. "The family will also be questioned at a later stage on the same lines. Chakraborty may also be questioned again if needed," said an officer privy to the probe.

Actress provided police protection

Mumbai, Aug. 29: Based on the request made by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), the Mumbai Police provided security to actress Rhea Chakraborty, who is accused of abetting the suicide of actor Sushant Singh Rajput, an official said on Saturday.

The CBI officials, who are in Mumbai to probe the actor's death case, made the request to the city police on Saturday, he



THE ASIAN AGE

30 AUGUST 2020



The pandemic kissiquette

The new normal has brought with it new priorities, new rules of engagement, and a new or rarely-used-before vocabulary, which includes 'coronavirus' itself, wfh (bet you thought it a swear word at first did!), lockdown, flattening the curve, and social distancing. We all now know the two-metre rule, though we don't seem to be able to abide by it (what's with all the barging, People?). We've also been advised not to hold hands, hug or kiss, except in our bubbles. Since kissing from two metres away is a physical impossibility, this rule isn't hard to maintain except for politicians and cheats, viz. often one and the same. The rags are full of scandals about British politicians caught with their pants two metres down, in bubbles that don't appear to be theirs, because the lockdown rules have eluded them (though they made them themselves). Yet, for many of us the pandemic rules of engagement are no more baffling than those we had to contend with before, such as the etiquette around kissing, aka. Kissiquette. Having had two children, and perfectly aware of how they came about, it's not romantic or affectionate smoothing that perplexes, but the formal, impersonal, performative

variety, practised with relative strangers. For example —

1) How many kisses before one can disengage? Us plebs would have it at one, if at all. But if you're part of the fashionable set, it is at least two, on either cheek. This, I understand, is French (not to be mistaken for French kissing which doesn't involve cheeks at all). At other times, they will complete their pair of kisses and lean in for a third. The Swiss Kiss, I believe. This is fraught with danger. Will they or won't they? Will you offend them by stepping away too soon or unwittingly end up molesting them by moving in for an unwanted third? As a writer and a reclusive one, this is more stress than I can handle.

especially at festival time, when the literary fraternity morph into showbiz luvvies, rushing into the arms of their peers, no matter how often they've stabbed each other in the back. At one such, I found myself in a sticky situation when having kissed me twice, the well-known author surfaced for air, but did not appear to have finished. Very much the novice, at both literary fests and social snogging, I became so



Bruderkuss: Leonid Brezhnev and Erich Honecker kiss on the 30th-anniversary celebrations of the foundation of the German Democratic Republic, in 1979

unnerved by the ticking time bomb of our face-off, I found myself holding up my half-eaten biscuit and squeaking, "Want my cookie?" They did not, nor my company thereafter. Which settled that, but left me no wiser about how many kisses are too many.

Or why not a wave, smile, or namaste instead?

2) Whose idea was it to start blowing kisses on Zoom? In these long months of webinars, only one person has, thus far, ended a session by actually planting a smacker on the screen. But nearly everyone now blows kisses at it. The problem with virtual kisses is that they're so indiscriminate. You cannot blow kisses selectively. It has to be to everyone in the 'room' or not at all. Or go to extraordinary lengths to ensure you're left at the end with the right people, the kissable people. Or shut down screens, open up other screens, kiss the wrong people. Gaah. What if, outrageous though it might sound, a blown kiss for you is not a thing of air and inconsequence but an affirmation of actual affection? And blowing kisses to all and sundry smack of hypocrisy? If that's making heavy weather of something slight, doesn't the awkwardness of it all bother you? While the planted smacker may have been the only one, several people in their inelegant attempt to throw kisses from too close to the screen have thwacked it instead, jolting the session to a premature close. Of course friendly chats shouldn't stint on kisses blown, but strangely, younger, singler friends tell me that romantic assignations, much of which has moved online, have turned out terribly chaste. That there's no va-va-voom in Zoom, no Tinder kegs are lit, and blowing of any sort hardly happens. Through time and tide and many conversations, slow and steady wins the kiss. Like the amours conducted through epistles in the pages of an Austen classic.

3) But what would Jane have made of kissy emojis and the many curious crosses in texts? Oh I've learnt to mirror them exactly when writing back, in the hope no one guesses I haven't a clue what they mean. I get that they're kisses of course, and a convenient way of expressing affection in writing, because how many of us have time to compose sonnets? Yet, how many emoji hearts are too many? What colour should they be? If it's a kissy emoji, should it wink, for example, if your feelings are true? How about those pesky little exes, I mean x's; when are they in excess? I was led to believe a capital X denoted passion till the many messages from my 102-year-old great-aunt-in-law, each carrying giant X's, convinced me otherwise. Similarly, when is it "love", and when "luv"? Whatever it is, I must have got it wrong hundreds of times, and offended as many as I've scared!

I know I no longer need worry in this pandemic if in-the-flesh salutations involve one kiss or three (hurrah). And if biscuits are misplaced in such transactions, there's clearly more for me (double hurrah). Yet the question standshow much performative love is too much (or too little), and why wasn't I sent the explanatory memo everyone else got? If you know the answers to these, especially the correct number of kisses, please drop them into an envelope and send to The Editor, Deccan Chronicle, Hyderabad.

Shreya Sen-Handley is the author of the recently published Strange: Stories, the award-winning Memoirs of My Body, and a forthcoming book of travel misadventures. Her Twitter and Insta handle is @shreyasenhan.

Subhani

Is Modi govt ready for Biden-Harris sarkar?



K.C. Singh

naming of nala Devi Kamala Harris. Indian-African-American senator from California, as Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden's running mate, elicited more excitement in the United States and of course in Chennai and elsewhere in India than in ruling BJP circles. When the external affairs ministry's spokes-man was asked why no congratulatory message had gone from Prime Minister Narendra Modi or anyone in Cabinet, he incredulously replied that India doesn't interfere in the internal affairs of other countries. Why then, one could ask, did Mr Modi serenade President Donald Trump at the "Howdy Modi" Indian discover relies in Howester diaspora rally in Houston in September last year? Or goad the crowd by shouting "Abki baar...", awaiting the roaring reply of "Trump sarkar". South Block's nervousness is understandable as external affairs minister S. with a US congressional committee demanding Indian-origin Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal be excluded for her critique of the Indian government's majoritarian politics. Senator Kamala Harris and other influential Democrats rallied to berate Mr Jaishankar. Ms Harris is, in any case, known human rights crusader.

What then would be Biden-Harris govern-ment's foreign policy priorities and their impact on India-US relations, tailored by Modi government to keep Mr Trump's ego massaged. A diaspora assemblage at Houston, followed by lakhs gathered at Ahmedabad, provided Mr Trump the stage

to indulge in populist self-gratification, while irri-tants like trade were sidestepped. Mr Trump in turn ignored anti-CAA agitation, including rioting in parts of New Delhi as he settled at Rashtrapati Bhavan for the farewell banquet.

James Traub, in Foreign

Policy magazine, quotes

Colin Kahl, then vice-president Joe Biden's national

security adviser in 2014-16, that three issues will dominate a Biden administration's agenda. One, the inter-connectedness of the world and global existential challenges like the Covid-19 pandemic; two, democracy at threat across the world; and three, with ongoing power transition between nations the return of great power competition. Mr Biden had earlier this year written in Foreign Affairs that the contest between democracy-liberalism and autocracy-fascism did not end in the last century. It lurks in the future again. Mr Biden plans a "Summit for in the year of his presidency, But his vision for resurrection of liberalism and democracy, centres on Europe. By instinct an "Atlanticist" his priority would be revival of European alliance that Mr Trump has scorned. James Traub tellingly remarks: "On many issues, emerging-world democracies like India and Brazil feel much more like the problem than a part of the solution". The smothered voices of liber-

alism in India would Many recent books have analysed worldwide democratic recession, seen in Turkey, Poland, Hungary, Brazil, etc. Even autocrats like Russia's Vladimir Putin and Chi-

na's Xi Jinping have eliminated term limits on their rule. How Democracies Die by Daniel Ziblatt and Steven Levitsky analyses the malaise. The authors conclude that "Trump's rise may itself pose a challenge to global democracy". Between the fall of the Berlin Wall and the Barack Obama presiden-cy, US governments main-tained a broadly pro-democratic foreign policy, except where strategic interests were dominant. But globalisation de-industrialising the US and the rush of immigrants created by Syrian crisis, with greater effect in Europe, and through America's porous southern border created the conditions for the rise of a populist leader playing on the sense of marginalisation of the working and middle-class white majority. The authors' conclusion, written before the pandemic hit the US, is only President Trump's gross failure would create public disgust and desire for political reform, as happened after Richard Nixon's resident in 1074 Weighing ignation in 1974. Weighing against this is dominant social media spreading unbridled bigotry, slanted news and prejudice.

America's founding fathers created foolproof institutions and separation of powers to counter executive, legislature or judiciary. They also mandated unwritten shared beliefs and practices that enabled those institutions to work. Two cardinal principles prescribed principles prescribed were mutual tolerance and institutional forbearance. Similar traditions were nurtured in Jawaharlal Nehru's India. Breached in the US, and progressively so in Índia, these ideals surrendered to highly polarised politics once Newt Gingrich in 1989 gained control over Republicans in two houses of US Congress. Institutional legitimacy of the US Congress got degraded, paving the way for the anti-establishment presidency of Mr Trump. Treating mainstream

interlopers, attacking political opponents to not just defeat but destroy them and stealing mandates by gerrymandering or vote suppression, as Mr Trump is attempting by attacking postal ballots, or as in India by forming defection-based govern-ments even after losing mandates. All these are

signs of slow strangulation of liberal democracy. New Delhi may today downplay Prime Minister Modi's unwise public political dalliance with Mr Trump, but the latter's campaign is merrily using videos of the Houston and Ahmedabad joint rallies in their publicity blitz to woo Indian-American votes, who mostly favour Democrats. According to Pew Research, Hindus constitute about 51 per cent of the two million-odd diaspora voters, others being Sikhs, Christians and Muslims. Will the diaspora be drawn to Democrats' promises on immigration laws, health insurance and a fairer economic order or accept Mr Modi's endorsement of a divisive, pro-rich Mr Trump, hoping he is better for India? US voters are living

through mishandled pandemic, economic chaos and racial tension caused street violence. Mr Trump is getting traction fanning the white majority's law and order fears, while promising a vaccine and economic turnaround is around the corner. US leadership is critical for addressing vital issues like climate change, antiglobalisation paranoia affecting global trade and investment, and an aggressive China. On November 3 will be known whether a reforming and pro-democracy wins, compelling majoritarian populists globally to reflect and perhaps change, or the US sees the return of disruptive, autocratic and First" Trump. "America

The writer is a former secretary in the external affairs ministry. He tweets at @ambkcsingh.

LETTERS A FATHER'S APPEAL

My son, Arafat (15), is a Class X student of Palong High School. He has been suffering from beta thalassemia and liver disease for a long time. He survives on two bags of blood transfusion every two months. I have to spend a lot on cross-matching, blood donor tests, hospitals, etc. I used to work for a local micro-finance organisation. I lost my job due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Now I am unemployed. I am poor also because my country is poor. Arafat's doctors told me to get him a bone marrow transplant. It costs US . \$500,000. It will never be possible for me to raise that huge amount. So I am approaching those with means to help my child. Please write back for details

Syed Rafigul Islam Shariatpur, Bangladesh

CSK'S FOLLY

THE SPECTRE OF COVID-19 looms large over the Indian Premier League with 12 members of the Chennai Super Kings contingent testing positive for the virus. A right-arm medium-fast bowler, who has recently played for India in white-ball cricket, along with a few staff members are among those affected. The development has forced the MS Dhoni-led side to extend the quarantine till September 1. The team's folly to have a camp in Chennai — which has a whopping number of cases—before bending the flight to Dube. before boarding the flight to Dubai has stumped many.

N.J. Ravi Chander

Bengaluru

GOVT TO BLAME

THERE IS OPEN WAR between the Narendra Modi government and states over the goods and services tax compensation which the Centre has refused to provide on a plea of near-bankruptcy, a situa-tion of their own making. The media which is the voice of the peo-ple must hold it accountable. The government must borrow from international institutions to tide over this crisis. The Reserve Bank of India, too, must work with states to help them to compensate for the shortfall in GST collection. There is no time to be lost

Bhagwan Thadani Mumbai

CARROT AND STICK

IN A TACTICAL MOVE, the Chinese ambassador has indicated that it is business as usual with New Delhi for Beijing which is keen to continue its trade ties. Sun Weidong also emphasized that the border row is only one incident which cannot decide the whole relationship between the two countries. However, he knows very well that a few words in public does not indicate the true intentions of his government which can be gauged from his other statements conveying that disengaging troops and easing tension along the border might take a long time. India, therefore, must not take him at face value only.

Santosh K. Satapathy Paralakhemundi

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

'23 vs 23': Is affable Ahmed the 'villain' of the piece?

Favouritism stink

Tt's 23 versus 23. On the face of it, the Congress power struggle is between the 23 dissenters and the Gandhis but a closer look would reveal something additional. Ghulam Nabi Azad, Kapil Sibal, Manish Tiwari and others have problems more with AICC treasurer Ahmed Patel than with Sonia or Rahul. The grudge against otherwise affable Patel is that he is pushing his favourites at all levels of the Congress hierarchy. Since Patel's residential address in New Delhi is 23. Mother Teresa Crescent, Congress insiders are dubbing the leadership challenge as

New kid on the block

The BJP's nominee for a Uttar Pradesh Rajya Sabha seat, Zafar-ul Islam, has a past in the Congress. The BJP spokesman who got his nomination for the remaining term of the late Amar Singh from Uttar Pradesh [in Rajya Sabha bypolls, the ruling

party gets the numerical strength] was a part of the Congress social media team till 2014. Zafar, then an investment banker, had joined Deependra Singh Hooda's team and functioned from 15, Gurudwara Rakabgunj Marg, when he became disillusioned with the grand old party. There has been no looking back since. It is a different matter that not everyone in the BJP is happy over the rise and rise of Zafar-ul Islam. Veteran Shahnawaz Hussain was a contender for the Upper House berth.

Interminable wait?

Call it a Covid-19 impact but in the coming Parliament session, Central Hall will be out of bounds for journalists and ex-MPs. The Lok Sabha Speaker has already constituted a panel to look into criteria for issuance of Central Hall passes. Cynics believe by the time the panel submits its report there will be a new Parliament building in the central vista. The panel, headed by TV personality Rajat Sharma, has not



By WAQYANAWIS

been meeting as its chairman wants to discuss issues online while most members feel a physical, offline discussion would be suitable. Emails are being exchanged to work out a consensus. Meanwhile, senior journalists who have passes in the Long and Distinguished (L&D) category are most exercised over the delay.

Azad's motivations

The Congress disquiet has rattled many, **L** particularly the manner in which Ghulam Nabi Azad has turned dissident. Azad's term is ending in early 2021 and there is no sign of renomination. At present Azad is the Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, enjoying the perks of a Union minister. There is likelihood that Mallikarjun Kharge, who was the Congress leader in the Lok Sabha during 2014-2019, may get the job in the Upper House. Some Congress insiders see more in Azad's defiance pointing that he has been the only former J&K chief minister who was not booked or detained under the Public Safety Act after the abrogation of Article 370. There is also talk of misuse of the

Jammu and Kashmir State Lands (Vesting of

Ownership to the Occupants) Act, 2001, popularly known as the Roshni Act during Azad's chief ministerial stint. Investigations into the land transfers subsequently said to have found that land in Gulmarg and elsewhere in the valley had been given over to ineligible beneficiaries.

Surrender to Sangh

BJP leader Jyotiraditya Scindia was recently at the RSS headquarters in Nagpur. It prompted Digvijaya Singh and a number of Madhya Pradesh Congress leaders to twist a notable Buddhist chant, Buddham Sharanam Gachchami, to 'Sangham Charanam Gachchami". In the original chanting, the disciple supposedly surrenders to the Buddha, the awakened one but in the perverted form, Scindia is accused of taking a shelter in RSS.

> The writer is a keen observer of the goings-on in backrooms of power

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IN BRIEF

Kansas girl's killer is

5th execution of 2020

Terre Haute: A Kansas girl's killer on Friday became the fifth federal inmate put to death this year, an execution that went forward only after a higher court tossed a ruling that would have required the government to get a prescription for the drug used to kill him. Questions about whether the drug pentobarbital causes pain prior to death had been a focus of appeals for Keith Nelson, 45, the second inmate executed this week in the Trump administration's resumption of federal executions this summer after a 17-year hiatus.

New Orleans pianist

Ronnie Kole dies

New Oreleans: Ronnie Kole, an acclaimed New Orleans pianist who performed across the globe, has died. He was 89. His death on Thursday night was announced on his website and the Ronnie Kole **Entertainment Facebook** page. The cause of death was not released. Kole was a Chicago native. In interviews, he said he suffered from a heart condition as a child and was discouraged from playing outdoors. He began learning piano from an aunt and considered himself largely self-taught. He went on the road at 16, he told WWL-TV. A master of a variety of musical styles, he performed for six presidents. He also played a rollicking version of "Amazing Grace" when Pope John Paul II visited New Orleans in 1987.

Royal bros reunite to

unveil Diana's statue

London: Britain's Princes William and Harry, believed to have become estranged from each other as the latter stepped back from frontline royalty to move to the US, are expected to reunite to unveil a statue in memory of their late mother, Princess Diana, to mark her 60th birth anniversary next year. Kensington Palace issued a rare joint statement on behalf of the royal brothers on Friday to announce that the memorial will be revealed in the Sunken Garden of Kensington Palace on July 1, 2021. The statue had been commissioned by William, the Duke of Cambridge, and Harry, the Duke of Sussex, the second and sixth in line to the British throne, respectively, a few years ago as a permanent memorial on the grounds of the palace in central London which was their late mother's home.

Nevada man to be 1st

virus reinfection in US

Reno: Nevada officials are reporting what may be the first documented case of coronavirus reinfection in the United States, following similar reports earlier this week from Hong Kong and Europe. A 25-year-old Reno man with mild Covid-19 symptoms initially was found to have the virus in April. recovered and tested negative twice, and then tested positive again in June. He was much sicker the second time, with pneumonia that required hospitalization and oxygen treatment. Genetic tests from each episode showed that viruses were similar in major ways but differed in at least 12 spots that would be highly unlikely from natural evolution of the bug if the man had it continuously rather than being infected a second time, said Mark Pandori. director of the Nevada State Public Health Laboratory.

KENOSHA GUNMAN SAYS TEEN ACTED IN SELF-DEFENCE

Kenosha, Wis., Aug. 29: A highprofile lawyer representing the 17-year-old boy charged with killing two protesters and wounding another during demonstrations on the streets of Kenosha, Wisconsin, said on Friday that his client had acted in self-defense. Atlanta-based attorney Lin Wood said video footage of the altercation would vindicate Kyle Rittenhouse despite what he described as misinformation being spread by the media.

"Kyle Rittenhouse acted in self-defense. Murder charges are factually unsupportable. An egregious miscarriage of justice is occurring with respect to this 17-year old boy"

Wood said on Twitter. Rittenhouse, who prosecutors say traveled 30 miles (50 km) to Kenosha from his home in Antioch, Illinois, before the shooting at about 11:45 p.m. on Tuesday, is charged with six criminal counts, including first-degree homicide and attempted homicide.



Smoke billows from burning tyres and pallets and fireworks as a few hundred protesters riot in the Rosengard

Riot in Sweden after Danish leader banned from Quran-burning rally

Friday, authorities said, hours after an anti-Muslim Danish politician was blocked from attending a Quran-burning rally

nearby.
About 300 people were on the streets of Malmo with violence escalating as the evening wore on, according to police and local

The demonstration was connected to an incident earlier in the day in which protesters burned a copy of the Islamic holy book police spokesman Rickard Lundqvist told Swedish

tabloid Expressen. Rasmus Paludan, who leads the far-right Danish anti-immigration party Hard Line, was due to travel to Malmo to speak at that event, which was being held on the same day as weekly prayers for the Muslim sabbath.

But authorities preempted Paludan's arrival by announcing he had been banned from entering Sweden for two years. He was later arrested near

"We suspect that he was going to break the law in Sweden," Calle Persson,

okesman for the police in Malmo said. 'There was also a risk

UAE FORMALLY

Dubai, Aug. 29: The ruler of the United Arab

Emirates issued a decree

Saturday formally end-

ing the country's boycott

of Israel amid a US-bro-

kered deal to normalise

relations between the

two countries. The

allows trade and com-

merce between the UAE,

home to oil-rich Abu

Dhabi and skyscraper-

studded Dubai, and Israel, home to a thriving

diamond trade, pharma-

ceutical companies and

The announcement fur-

ther cements the Aug 13

deal opening up relations

between the two nations,

which required Israel to

halt its contentious plan

to annex occupied West

Bank land sought by the

The state-run news

agency said the decree

formally ending the boy-

cott came on the orders of

Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed

Al Nahyan, the ruler of

now

announcement

tech start-ups.

Palestinians.

Abu Dhabi.

ENDS ISRAEL

BOYCOTT

Stockholm, Aug. 29: Protesters threw stones at police and burned tyres in southern Sweden late on Sweden late on crowds flood US

country in decades.

Al Sharpton, the civil rights activist who gave

the eulogy at Floyd's funeral, told the crowd it

was time for a "new con-

versation" with America.

"We need to have a con-

versation about your racism, about your big-

otry, about your hate,

about how you would put

your knee on our neck

while we cry for our

lives," he said.
Often fighting back tears, relatives of Floyd,

Blake and Breonna Taylor

dead by police in her own

sea of people, who repeat-

edly called out the vic-

tims' names in response.

apartment last March – took turns addressing the

– a black 26-year-old shot

Washington, Aug. 29: Tens of thousands of protesters demanding an end to racial injustice and police brutality thronged the US capital on Friday, signaling a renewed groundswell of anger gripping the nation fol-lowing a white officer's shooting of African-

American Jacob Blake. Crowds flooded the National Mall for a mass march marking the anniversary of Reverend Martin Luther King Jr's historic "I have a dream"

speech on August 28, 1963. Friday's demonstration was dubbed "Get Your Knee Off Our Necks," in reference to George Floyd, who suffocated beneath the knee of a white officer in Minneapolis in May, igniting the most wide-

that his behaviour... would pose a threat to society." But his supporters went ahead with the rally, and three people were then arrested for inciting racial hatred. Paludan later put a scatning message on wrapped in bacon

from Sweden for two years. However, rapists and murderers are always welcome!" he wrote.

Paludan last attracted media attention for burning a Koran meat that is anathema for "Sent back and banned Muslims.

ROYAL TABOO

Pathum Thani: When university student "Rung" calmly read out 10 demands to reform Thailand's monarchy before thousands of protesters at a prodemocracy rally this month, she defied the country's biggest political taboo. Backed by an arch-royalist military and shielded by draconian royal defamation laws, the superrich monarchy wieds enormous influence in nearly every sphere of Thai society.

But 21-year-old Rung — real name Panusaya Sithi-jirawattanakul — said the Aug. 10 protest at Thammasat University outside Bangkok was "the right time" to ask for change, even though she risked arrest. "When I left the stage, I felt like I had expanded the boundaries ... raised the limits on how people can talk about the monarchy," the bespectacled sociology and anthropology student said. The demands Rung announced that day included more transparency for the royal family's fortune and the abolition of the royal defamation law, which carries a sentence of up to 15 years in prison per

Many foreign journalists in Belarus lose accreditation

Belarusian authorities on Saturday withdrew the accreditation of several foreign media journalists, including *AFP*, ahead of the latest demonstration challenging the results of the presidential election.

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko, who has been in power since 1994, is facing unprecedented protests since the disputed August 9 election in which he claimed a landslide victory with 80 percent of the vote. The opposition has rejected the results as manipulated, and has organised two demonstrations this month and called for a large-scale protest on

Government spokesman Anatoly Glaz said the decision to revoke the media accreditations was taken on the recommendation of the country's counter-ter-

He did not specify how many journalists were affected by the measure, but foreign media including the BBC and Radio Liberty reported the withdrawal of accreditation of several of their journalists.

'The Belarusian Foreign Ministry called me and informed me that my accreditation and that of one of my colleagues as BBC correspondents had been cancelled. They demanded that I return my card," journalist Tatyana Melnichuk

Opposition leader Svetlana Tikhanovskaya has fled to neighbouring Lithuania, an EU nation, after claiming she beat the 65year-old leader at the polls and calling for the protests.

She called news about the withdrawn media accreditations extremely worrying. "If true, it is another sign that this proving is parally book." regime is morally bankrupt and the only way it will attempt to cling onto power is by fear and intimidation," she said in a statement. — AFP statement.

YOUNG BLOGGER MOBILISES PROTEST IN BELARUS

Warsaw, Aug. 29: fresh-faced 22-year-old blogger is using nothing more than his keyboard to run the main communications hub for protesters in Belarus as they mount an unprecedented challenge to the regime of President regime of President Alexander Lukashenko, often dubbed Europe's last dictator.

Stepan Svetlov is the ounder of Nexta Live, a Telegram channel with 2.1 million subscribers that helps mobilise protesters and shares photo and video content from the demonstrations. "It started out as a school project," Svetlov said in an interview in the Polish capital Warsaw where he has been living in exile under police protection after having received death threats.

Don calls Biden a 'low-IQ' individual

Trump asserts he will win in November polls

Manchester, Aug. 29: US President Donald Trump on Friday insulted his Democratic challenger Joe Biden as "low-IQ" and barely conscious in a New Hampshire speech reinforcing his strategy of painting himself as the defender of the country ag-

ainst socialist mayhem.

The speech, filled with hyperbolic and inaccurate descriptions of life under the Democrats, followed Trump's White House address to the Republican convention late Thursday where he warned that "no one will be safe in Biden's America." Trump told the crowd assembled at the airport in Manchester, New Hampshire, that he was sure of victory on November 3.

"Does anyone have any doubt?" he asked to a cho-

rus of support. "I will have lost to a low-IQ individual. I don't want that. 'Sleepy Joe,' I don't want it," Trump said of the former vice president and longtime senator. "The guy doesn't know he's alive." Much as he did Thursday at the White House, Trump claimed to be singlehandedly protecting the country from Democratic anarchists.

And he again said that the coronavirus, which has killed more than 1,80,000 Americans already, was under control. "Hopefully we're at the end," he said. The difference in New Hampshire, where he hosted a scaled-down version of his trademark pre-Coronavirus rallies, was that Trump was able to cut

free with ad-libs and even

to be US Prez: Don THE COMPANY that owns the Trump

Harris 'not competent'

Washington, Aug. 29: Kamala Harris is "not competent" to be president, US President Donald Trump has said as he launched an attack on the Indian-origin senator's credentials for the top post.

Addressing his supporters at a Republican cam-paign rally in New Hampshire on Friday, Trump said he would support seeing a female presi dent in the US but suggested that his daughter and senior White House adviser Ivanka Trump would be a better candidate for such

Harris, 55, was a presidential aspirant until last year before she dropped out of the race because of lack of popular support. Harris returned to politi-cal limelight after Joe Biden, the Democratic Party's presidential candidate, picked her as his running mate in November 3 election. in

Born to a Jamaican father and an Indian mother, Harris is the first Indian-American and first

International Hotel in Vancouver has filed for bankruptcy.

ACCORDING TO the Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy Canada, TA Hotel **Management Limited** Partnership filed for bankruptcy on Thursday. Records show the company has CDN\$4.7 million (US\$3.59 million) in liabilities and CDN\$1.1 million (US\$840,000) in assets.

THE FIRST meeting of creditors is expected on Sept. 16.

woman of colour to be picked by a major American political party for the top post, "You know I want to see the first woman president also, but I don't want to see a woman president get into that position the way she'd do it, and she's not competent," Trump

more personal attacks on his rival. "We are all that stand

between the American people and the left wing mob," he said. "If you want to save democracy from the mob, then you must vote to defeat an extremely poor

date."To cheers and laughter, Trump, 74, described 77-year-old Biden as "weak" and "the worst candidate ever put up by the Democratic party."As he has before, Trump claimed falsely that Biden, a lifelong Catholic, is "against God." — AFP

Matt Hancock warns of extensive lockdowns

London, Aug. England could face "national action" and "very extensive local lockdowns" in the event of a winter Coronavirus wave, the government said Saturday, with a "worst-case scenario" of 80.000 deaths.

"A second wave is clearly visible in other parts the world, Health Secretary Matt Hancock told Saturday's Times newspaper.

"Cases go up again, and we have to use very extensive local lockdowns or take further national action. We don't rule that out but we don;t want to see it." Britain has been one of the country's hardest hit by the disease, with over 41,000 dead, but has eased lockdown restrictions recently as hospitalisations and deaths dropped. But cases have ticked up in recent weeks and the government is worried about another wave of the virus arriving during flu season.

Although more restrictions could be re-introduced, schools would likely remain open, according to a report prepared for the government by the Sage scientific advisory group and aired on BBC's Newsnight late Friday.

By November "policy measures would be put in place to reduce nonhousehold contacts to half of their normal pre-March 2020 levels," it

The report found 85,000 more could die across Britain, with more than 80,000 in England alone, in a "reasonable worstcase scenario."

Berlin braces for 'anti-Corona' demo

virus sceptics are set to create infection risks," descend on Berlin on she added. Saturday for a mass protest against pandemic restrictions that was allowed to go ahead after

a bitter legal battle. Police said they will turn out in force and strictly monitor compliand social distancing, with Berlin police chief Barbara Slowik warning that if the demonstrators do not adhere to virus safety rules, police will clear the area "very

We will not be able or lence.

29: willing to watch tens of Thousands of Corona- thousands assemble and

Berlin city authorities had previously decided not to allow the Saturday demonstration to go ahead, fearing that the estimated 22,000 protesters would not keep a distance of 1.5 metres apart ance with mask-wearing or comply with face mask requirements.

The ban sparked outrage from organisers and their supporters who flooded social media with angry messages vowing to protest anyway, with some even calling for vio-

HK MASS VIRUS TEST PLAN HAMPERED BY SWIRLING CHINA DISTRUST

Hong Kong , Aug. 29: Hong Kong' plan to offer free Coronavirus tests to all residents has become swept up in the festering political debate dividing the city, where many remain deeply distrustful of both local leaders and China.

Billed as a benevolent public health initiative possible with Chinese help, the citywide tests are set to start on Tuesday in an attempt to stamp out a third wave of infections that have swept through the densely populated financial

doctors and companies from the mainland has sent the rumour mills into overdrive and compounded fears surveillance Beijing's state, while many health experts in the city have questioned the efficacy of a mass testing pro-

gramme. On the authoritarian mainland, biometric data forms a crucial part of China's vast security dragnet and many Hong Kongers fear mass testing will lead to widespread DNA collection — something local authorities have strenuously denied.

But the involvement of

CONTEST FOR POWER Right-hand man Suga, longtime anchor of government, seen as a possible successor

Japan succession race for PM kicks off

Tokyo, Aug. 29: The race to succeed Prime Minister that forced him to cut informally on Saturday, with several contenders announcing their plans to stand, a day after Japan's longest-serving leader announced his resigna-

ing a recurrence of ulcera- considered.

Shinzo Abe kicked off short his first term in office, but that he would stay on until his successor is decided.

Exactly how the process will unfold was still unclear, with local media reporting on Saturday that Abe said he was suffer- several options were being

opt for a more traditional leadership involving lawmakers but also members of the party nationwide.

But the urgency of the situation, as well as the constraints imposed by the coronavirus outbreak, could see the party instead

Abe's ruling Liberal opt to poll only its lawmak-Democratic Party could ers and regional represeners and regional representatives —a faster process. A decision on how the election will be held, and when, is expected early next week, along with more clarity on who will

stand for the post. A few would-be candidates have already thrown their hats into the ring,

including party policy chief Fumio Kishida, a mild-mannered former foreign minister considered Abe's personal choice for successor, and ex-defence minister Shigeru Ishiba, who is seen as more popular with voters but commands less party support than some other candi-

Finance Minister Taro ter Taro Kono, a social-Aso, himself a former media-savvy former forprime minister and long considered a likely successor to Abe, has announced he will not stand.

Other possible candidates include powerful chief cabinet secretary Yoshihide Suga, viewed by many as a frontrunner, and current defence minis

media-savvy former foreign minister who is seen as something of a longshot.

One woman is among those expected to stand so far: Seiko Noda, a former cabinet minister whose chances are thought to be

-AFP

OUR CRITIC'S RATING Outstanding ★★★★★ | Great ★★★★ | Good ★★★ | Okay ★★ | Poor ★ | Truly Terrible TT

Black Panther Chadwick dies of cancer

slipped on the cleats of Jackie Robinson, then the Godfather of Soul's dancing shoes, portraying both Black American icons with a searing intensity that commanded respect. When the former playwright suited up as Black Panther, he brought cool intellectual gravitas to the Marvel superhero whose "Wakanda forever!" salute reverberated worldwide.

As his Hollywood career boomed, though, Boseman was privately undergoing "countless surgeries and chemotherapy" to battle colon cancer, his family said in a statement announcing his death at age 43 on Friday. He'd been diagnosed at stage 3 in 2016 but never spoke publicly

The cancer was there when his character T'Challa visited the ancestors' "astral plane" in poignant scenes from the Oscarnominated *Black Panther*, there when he first became a producer on the action thriller 21 Bridges, and there last summer when he shot an adaptation of a play by his hero August Wilson. It was there when he played a radical Black leader — seen only in flashbacks and visions - whose death is mourned by Vietnam War comrades-in-arms in Spike Lee's *Da 5 Bloods*.

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

"It was the honor of his career to bring King T'Challa to life in Black Panther. Boseman died at his home in the Los Angeles area with his wife and family by his side, his publicist Nicki Fioravante told The Associated Press.

Boseman is survived by his wife and a parent and had no children, Fioravante

Born and raised in South Carolina, where he played Little League baseball and AAU basketball, Boseman graduated from Howard University in Washington, D.C. He wrote plays, acted and directed in theater and had small roles in television before landing his breakthrough role.

His striking portrayal of the color-linedemolishing baseball star Robinson opposite Harrison Ford in 2013's 42 drew attention in Hollywood and made him a star. A year later, he wowed audiences as Brown in the biopic Get On Up.

Boseman died on a day that Major League Baseball was celebrating Jackie Robinson day. "His transcendent performance in 42 will stand the test of time and serve as a powerful vehicle to tell Jackie's story to audiences for generations to come," the league wrote in a tweet.

Expressions of shock and despair poured in late Friday from fellow actors, athletes, musicians, Hollywood titans, fans and politicians. Viola Davis, who acted alongside Boseman in "Get On Up" and the upcoming Wilson adaptation, said: "Chadwick.....no words to express my devastation of losing you. Your talent, your spirit, your heart, your authenticity.'

"He was a gentle soul and a brilliant artist, who will stay with us for eternity through his iconic performances," said Denzel Washington, who funded a scholarship Boseman used to study theater at Oxford and produced the upcoming Wilson film.

Disney executive chairman Bob Iger called Boseman "an extraordinary talent, and one of the most gentle and giving souls I have ever met."

Captain America actor Chris Evans called Boseman "a true original. He was a deeply committed and constantly curious artist. He had so much amazing work still left to create.'

Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden tweeted that Boseman "inspired

a shining light. Wakanda forever.

generations and showed them they can be anything they want — even super heroes. Boseman's final tweet was an image of himself and US Senator Kamala Harris, celebrating her selection as Biden's run-

His T'Challa character was first introduced to the blockbuster Marvel cinematic universe in 2016's Captain America: Civil War, and his Wakanda forever salute became a pop culture landmark after the release of *Black Panther* two years ago.

"I don't think the world was ready for a *Black Panther* movie before this moment. Socially and politically, it wasn't ready for ' he told AP at the time.

The film's vision of Afrofuturism and the technologically advanced civilisation of Wakanda resonated with audiences, some of whom wore African attire to showings and helped propel "Black Panther" to more than \$1.3 billion in global box office. It is the only Marvel Studios film to receive a best picture Oscar nomination.

Boseman said he more easily identified with the film's antagonist, played by Michael B. Jordan, who had been cut off from his ancestral roots: "I was born with some Killmonger in me, and I have learned to T'Challa throughout my studies," he told AP while promoting the film.

'Ît's the place where you start. All African Americans, unless they have some direct connection, have been severed from that past. There's things that cannot be tracked," he continued. You were a product, sold. So it's very difficult as an African American to connect at some points directly to Africa. I have made that part of my search in my life. So those things were already there when I got into the role. The character was seen standing

silently dressed in a black suit at Tony Stark's funeral in *Åvengers:* Endgame. A Black Panther sequel had been announced, and was one of the studio's most anticipated upcoming Even at the outset of his

Hollywood career, Boseman was clear-eved about — and even skeptical of — the industry in which he would become an international star.

"You don't have the same exact experience as a Black actor as you do as a white actor. You don't have the same opportunities. That's evident and true," he told AP while promoting "42 "The best way to put it is: How often do you see a movie about a black hero who has a love story ... he has a spirituality. He has an intellect. It's weird to say it, but it doesn't happen that often. Black Panther, written and directed by

Ryan Coogler, helped drive a conversation in Hollywood about the importance of featuring non-white characters in and hiring non-white filmmakers for its most high-profile films. Actor Simu Liu, starring in Marvel's first film centered on an Asian character, tweeted: "Without Chadwick, and what he gave to his character, there is no Shang Chi. Period. My career rides on the coattails of a great man.

In addition to Robinson and Brown, Boseman portrayed the future US Supreme Court Justice

I woke up to the saddest news of Chadwick

passing away. It's been such a heavy year for

all of us. But that news broke me. He was such

humanised the larger-than-life historical figures with the same soulful, reserved dignity — interrupted by flashes of sparkling wit — that he would later bring to T'Challa.

He took on his first producing job in last year's action thriller *21 Bridges*, in which he also starred. Boseman completed one last performance, in a Netflix adaptation of August Wilson's Ma Rainey's Black

He revered the playwright famous for his depiction of the Black experience, writing in a 2013 Los Angeles Times essay: "For the songs, rituals and folklore that were lost in slavery's middle passage, his plays are those forgotten songs remixed for the struggles of adapting to these shores ... In the similar way that Wilson's work was influenced by the blues of Bessie Smith, Muddy Waters and W.C. Handy, my plays were infused with Tupac, Biggie and

Boseman first got into theater, acting and writing plays as an undergrad at Howard. He visited Africa for the first time during college with director and theater professor Mike Malone, working in Ghana to preserve and cel

proscenium stage. He told AP the trip had been "one of the most significant learning experiences of my life."

Boseman had roles on TV shows like ABC Family's *Lincoln Heights* and NBC's Persons Unknown, but before 42 he had only acted in one film, 2008's football drama *The Express*.

Asked about his own childhood heroes and icons, Boseman cited Black political leaders and musicians: Malcolm X, Martin Luther King Jr., Bob Marley, Public Enemy, A Tribe Called Quest and

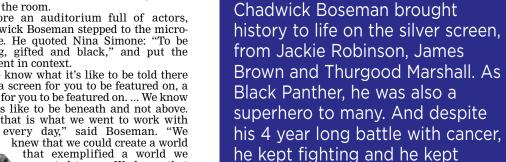
While deeply private and often guarded in his public appearances and interviews, he made clear that he understood the significance of his work and its impact on the broader culture.

At the 2019 Screen Actors Guild Awards, Black Panther won best ensemble, electri-

Before an auditorium full of actors, Chadwick Boseman stepped to the microphone. He quoted Nina Simone: "To be young, gifted and black," and put the

moment in context. We know what it's like to be told there isn't a screen for you to be featured on, a stage for you to be featured on. ... We know what's like to be beneath and not above. And that is what we went to work with

wanted to see. We knew that we had something to give."



 Martin Luther King III, eldest son of civil rights activist Martin Luther King Jr

inspiring. He will be missed.

What a gentle gifted soul.

between surgeries and

looks like

Showing us all that greatness

chemotherapy. This is what dignity

Oprah Winfrey,

TV star and author

Chadwick's passing is absolutely devastating. He was our T'Challa, our Black Panther, and our dear friend... Each time he appeared on screen, he created something truly indelible... Our hearts are broken and our thoughts are with Chadwick Boseman's family. Your legacy will live on forever. Rest In Peace.

> Marvel president **Kevin Feige**

He was a gentle soul and a brilliant artist, who will stay with us for eternity through his iconic performances over his short yet illustrious career. God bless Chadwick Boseman.

Denzel Washington

Here's to an incredible man with immeasurable talent, who leaned into life regardless of his personal battles. You never truly know what the people around you might be going through - treat them with kindness and cherish every minute you have together. RIP.

Halle Berry

This road to boredom is paved with cliches from the '80

Sadak 2 AST: Sanjay Dutt, Alia Bhatt, Aditya oy Kapoor, Jisshu Sengupta, Makarand nde, Gulshan Grover, Priyanka Mahesh Bhatt Streaming on Disney+Hotstar

SUPARNA SHARMA

adak 2 is a homely production of the Bhatts. Daddy Mahesh Bhatt has directed his younger daughter in a sequel to his 1991 film, Sadak, which starred his elder daughter, Pooja Bhatt. Both films were produced by his bro, Mukesh Bhatt

Sanjay Dutt was the hero of that film, and he is the hero of this film as well. He bashed up bad-guy Sadashiv Amrapurkar then because, I suspect, he kept stealing the heroine's clothes and wigs and prancing around in them. Now too he beats up the baddie, Gyaan Prakash "Guruji" (Makarand Deshpande), when he appears in a gotta-patti lehnga-dupatta that the heroine had probably kept for a spe-

Daddy Bhatt has returned to direction after 19-20 years. In his long career, the prolific director made Arth, Saaransh, Janam, Naam — stellar films in a large pool of tedious

mediocrity. But he has never in his life made a film as bad as *Sadak 2*.

Lewis Hamilton, Racing driver

Watching Sadak 2 felt like he had regurgitated the indigestibles of Sadak, which wasn't a great film to begin with, but worked then because of the innocent impishness and lisp of Pooja Bhatt, Sadashiv's stellar evil act and catchy songs.

Sadak 2, which is quite literally set in Sadak — in the sense of what became of those characters — takes off on the exact same journey with illconceived characters who seem to belong nowhere except the godowns where terribly tacky, B-grade scripts of the 1980s were discarded.

arva (Alia Bhatt) is a riche-rich heiress of the Desai Group of Aheiress of the Desar Group of Industries, owned by Papa Yogesh Desai (Jisshu Sengupta) and mummy Shakuntala. At 21, she is to inherit it all.

But Shakuntala is dead and replaced. Nandini Maa (Priyanka Bose) is Aarya's maasi and new mommy. She is also, perhaps, the murderer of her sister at the behest of Guruji.

So Aarya rages and devotes herself to waging an Instagram war against him. This involves wearing a hoodie and entering his ashram to set fire to Guruji's larger-than-life cutout.

I request you, dear reader, to pause and consider this: Aarya in a hoodie first spray-paints "BADLA" on Guruji's cutout, then pours petrol on it and sets it on fire. As it burns, she starts recording it and posts it on her @IndiaAgainstFakeGurus account,



#Victory

What was the point of spraying the word "BADLA" when she was going to set fire to it? Anyway.

A few seconds later, when accosted by Guruji's armed chellas, Aarya points two fingers and pretends to shoot, saying, "Thish"

Aarya is deemed mentally unstable by Nandini Maa and given the aforementioned sequence of events, there may be merit in that diagnosis. Meanwhile, somewhere in Mumbai,

Ravi (Sanjay Dutt), the owner of Pooja Tours and Travels, is crying and smelling a saree. He keeps talking to Pooja under whose large black & white poster a scented candle burns. He is so sad that he decides to off himself. But the ceiling hinge can't take his weight. He is rushed to the same psychiatric hospital where Aarya is being

Upon return, Ravi gets busy trying another contraption to off himself, but Aarya, having escaped her luxurious house that looks like a banquet of banquet halls designed by JJ Valaya, keeps knocking on his door. It seems that three months ago Pooja took her booking to be driven to Kailash

Meanwhile, Gyaan Prakash appears in a tiny black dhoti and wearing the entire Tribal collection of Amrapali jewellery, in gold. His hair is frizzy and so is his ominous chatter which amounts to ordering the offing of a young heiress

Enroute to Kailash, Aarya tells Ravi to take a detour to a jail. When he asks why, we are treated to a dull millennial flashback that involves trolling, devoted activists and a meeting of the two. Only two activists of India Fights

Fake Gurus matter to Sadak 2 — Aarya and one troll-turned-ally, Vishal (Aditya Roy Kapoor).

Vishal emerges from Central Jail with a guitar dangling on one shoulder and an ullu in a cage in his other hand. It's as if he wasn't serving a sentence for a heinous crime but was invited by the inmates to sing and

strum his guitar for a weekend gig. Ravi doesn't like Vishal, but he likes Kumbhkaran the ullu and they briefly form a bond which reminded me of Iqbal and Allah Rakha (Coolie).

In flashback we see Aarya and Vishal arguing over the need to fight andh vishwas and rich kids faking concern, all without even a hint of irony given the fact that they are on their way to Kailash Parvat to say Har Har

Aarya discovers that at least two people she trusted have been planted by Guruji to off her, and Ravi decides that given Aarva's mental state and the irritating imbecility displayed by Vishal, one Hathkata goon (Gulashan Grover) and a cop played by Bollywood's always reliable overactor (Mohan Kapoor), he has to take charge. So he goes forth alone, chanting Ram Naam Satya Hai. Lucky for him, all the people he needs to off are gathered in the banquet designed by Valaya.

After a bloody "thish-thish" climax comes a press conference. This scene, which goes on and on, is so bad and boring that I felt like not only had we just been served the most tasteless dish by a chef we had gone to expectantly, but as he turned to walk away,

he let out a loud, smelly fart.

lia Bhatt has never been so bad or looked so lost, although the same can't be said about Aditya Roy Kapoor. Like in many of his films, here too he seems as if he had come to the sets to hang, but was suddenly told to go change and say two-three lines.

Watching Priyanka Bose "act" is a chore. It's as she can only play Lady Macbeth going mental, over and over. Sadak 2's screenplay, written by Mahesh Bhatt and Sumitra Sengupta,

was probably completed on a post-it note. It first festoons it's two young characters with random millennial characteristics and ticks and then incarcerates them in a story from the

Every cliche that had been discarded and forgotten is revived to fill in two

Mahesh Bhatt's forte has always been neurosis, quivering love, intense intimacy, insecurity. But here, with characters created out of Bollywood's thin air, it's all either claustrophobic or plain stupid.

Sanjay Dutt still has the power to command the screen, but he has just two things to do here - look tearyeyed at Pooja's photo, or babble to her pret aatma that talks back sometimes. Jisshu Sengupta is quite good, but Makarand Deshpande, who came all dressed up to be the centre of a bad boy party, gets one-and-a-half scene, an itsy-bitsy lungi and no conditioner. Any wonder he stole the heroine's

Humpy helps

India reach final

Chennai: Koneru Humpy took the spotlight as she beat Monika Socko in a nervy tiebreak to help India pip Poland in the semifinals and reach the summit clash of the FIDE Online Chess Olympiad on Saturday. After the two teams won one round each in regular play, world rapid champion Humpy was pitted against Socko for the Armageddon (a tie-break), and the Indian beat her rival in style with black pieces to clinch a spot in the final. India will play the winner of the other semifinal between Russia and the USA, in the summit clash on Sunday. It was, however, not an easy job for the Indian team as they lost the

first round 2-4 before bouncing back strongly in the second with a crushing 4.5-1.5 win. Humpy did the rest in the match-deciding tie-break. Viswanathan Anand came into his own with a much-needed win over Jan-Krzystof Duda in 78 moves in the second round after losing to his opponent in the first round. - PTI

Djokovic in final, **Osaka withdraws**

New York: World number one Novak Djokovic battled into the ATP and WTA Western & Southern Open final despite a neck problem while Japan's Naomi Osaka withdrew from the tournament after reaching the final due to a left hamstring injury on Saturday, just two days before the start of the US Open. Djokovic was treated twice by a trainer for neck issues but ral-

lied to defeat Spanish eighth seed Roberto Bautista Agut 4-6, 6-4, 7-6 (7/0). He will face Milos Raonic in Saturday's final after the Canadian eliminated Greek fourth seed Stefanos Tsitsipas 7-6 (7/5), 6-3. The world number 10's with-

drawal means meaning Victoria Azarenka takes the title by walkover. "I'm sorry to have to withdraw today with an injury," said Osaka. — AFP

Kristoff wins first stage of Tour

Nice, France: Norway's Alexander Kristoff won the opening stage of the Tour de France on Saturday in a mass bunch sprint along the iconic Promenade des Anglais

UAE Team Emirates rider Kristoff takes hold of the race leader's yellow jersey following a stage littered with crashes on a slippery 154km loop around Nice, where the finish line was limited to just 100 spectators due to strict coronavirus health

the French Riviera on Saturday, two months later than planned and under the shadow of a coronavirus pandemic which could still shatter hopes of the world's greatest bike race making it to the Paris finish line in three weeks' time. — AFP

The Tour de France set off from

protocols.

NBA playoffs

set to resume

Washington: NBA playoff games are set to resume on Saturday, but players are determined to keep the focus on the fight for social justice and racial equality with the help from club owners and the league. NBA commissioner Adam Silver and National Basketball Players Association executive director Michele Roberts said in a joint statement on Friday that "All parties agreed to resume NBA playoff games on Saturday". Players and the league agreed to form a social justice coalition to address a broad range of issues including access to voting, promoting civic engagement and police and criminal

Live on **FORMULA ONE**

Belgian Grand Prix Main Race from 6.35 pm on Star Sports Select 2, HD

CRICKET

England vs Pakistan Second T20 from 6.30 pm on Sony Six, HD

Caribbean Premier League Barbados Tridents vs St Lucia Zouks from 7.30 pm; St Kitts & Nevis Patriots vs Guyana Amazon Warriors from 11.30 pm on Star Sports 1, 2, HD

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DOUBLE WHAMMY

Raina pulls out of IPL, virus count touches 13

Over a dozen Covid-19 positive cases in the Chennai Super Kings camp and a surprise pullout by Suresh Raina have sent shock waves across IPL teams based in Dubai and Abu Dhabi. Even though the other teams have settled into their bubbles and begun training, the Covid-19 scare has raised serious doubts about the tournament, scheduled to start on September 19.

The BCCI is yet to announce the fixtures as different health proto-cols in Dubai and Abu Dhabi have complicated the scheduling issue.

As defending champions, Mumbai Indians were expected to take on CSK in the opener but now that the M.S. Dhoni-led team's pre-tournament camp is in disarray, BCCI could give them extra time and rework

the plan.
A top CSK official said the team is looking to training September 5, with those who tested positive expected to rejoin the bio-bubble later. As many as 13 from

CSK have tested positive and all of them have been moved to a different hotel for a two-week isolation. "All the affected personnel as well as their close contacts are asymptomatic and have been isolated from other team members," said a BCCI release without mentioning the name of the franchise or players.

FOCUS ON

COUNSELLINGAs Raina was reportedly about the number of 'worried' cases within the bubble and dealing with family issues, the focus of the teams has now shifted to counselling their players. A few teams, including the Super Kings, are said to have sought help from mental health experts to deal with the situation. "It's very important to survive in a bio-bubble where players have to cope with Covid-19 fear, isolation and anxiety. We sense that some players are not tneir usuai seif with so

Spa-Francorchamps (Belgium), Aug. 29: Lewis Hamilton deliv-

record breaking qualify-

ing laps to claim his sixth Belgian Grand Prix

pole position and a record-increasing 93rd of

his career with a flaw-

less demonstration of

leader clocked a best lap in one minute and 41.252

seconds in the final sec-

onds of a session that he

dominated in a personal

tribute to the Hollywood

film actor Chadwick

Boseman, who died on Friday. His Mercedes

Bottas was second, to

complete another 'black

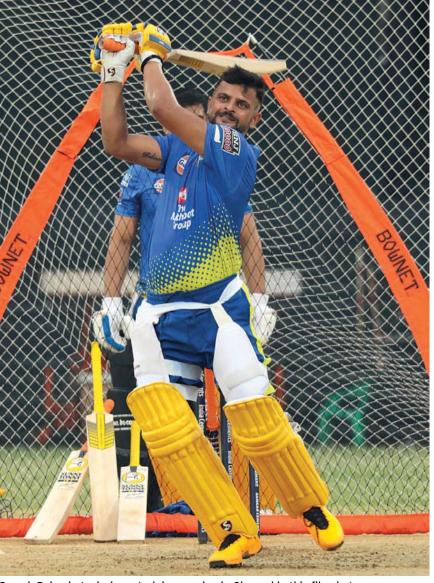
team-mate

championship

Valtteri

speed on Saturday.

two successive



Suresh Raina bats during a training session in Chennai in this file photo.

protocols to follow," a official said. Players have been constantly monitored through a gadget (a fob) which they are supposed to wear all the time. Apart from that, they have to feed their body

temperature in a mobile app on a daily basis. **FOREIGN PLAYER**

A foreign player who is currently in the CSK bio-bubble has reportedly raised concerns over the pre-departure conditioning camp in Chennai which is believed to be the source of infection. A net bowler and a member of the social media eam nad to be left out of

It was Hamilton's

fifth pole in seven

races this year, a

feat he said he had

wanted to achieve

Boseman whose life

arrows' front row of the

grid, but he was more

than half a second adrift

It was Hamilton's fifth

pole in seven races this

vear, a feat he said he

had wanted to achieve in

whose life had been an

inspiration to Hamilton.

Boseman

of Hamilton's pace.

memory of

in memory of

had been an

inspiration to

Hamilton.

tested positive in Chennai. CSK were the only team to organise a pre-departure conditioning camp for their Indian players at the insistence skipper Dhoni. The ʻjittery foreign player has questioned the decision to hold the camp in a city that witnesses at least 1,000 new positive cases every day.

BHAJJI TO JOIN CSK

CAMP ON SEPT. 1Off-spinner Harbhajan Singh, who opted out of conditioning camp in Chennai, is expected to join the squad on September 1. He had withdrawn from the team's travel schedule because of personal many restrictions and the contingent after they reasons.

Hamilton dedicates pole to Boseman

"Today was a very, very clean session for me and

the end of the lap was

getting better and better. We did such a lot of work

for this in the back-

Max Verstappen, who trails Hamilton by 37

points in the drivers'

title race, took third place for Red Bull ahead

Ricciardo, who aborted his final lap, and Alex

Albon in the second Red

Bull. After winning last

year's race, Charles Leclerc and his Ferrari

team-mate Sehastian

Vettel were eliminated

during Q2 and will start

Sunday's race from 13th

and 14th positions.

Renault's Daniel

ground."

Banton sparkles before rain washes out 1st T20

Manchester, Aug. 29: England rising star Tom Banton made a fine 71 before Pakistan fought back in the first Twenty20 international at Old Trafford on Friday only for rain to reduce the match to

a no-result washout. England had threatened a huge total while the 21year-old Banton was compiling his maiden fifty in

four T20s at this level. But his exit left England 109-3 and sparked a collapse that saw four wickets lost for 14 runs in 19 balls rain fell with came on."

BELGIAN GP

England 131-6 off 16.1

The umpires held a lengthy inspection but decided shortly after 9:00 pm (2000 GMT) that the outfield was too wet to get the game back on. But Banton, opening

after Jason Roy was ruled out with a side injury, at least had a night to remember. "It was good fun," Banton told Sky Sports. "I struggled to begin with, they bowled quite nicely and then I just backed myself when the spinners

TO NETS AFTER FIVE MONTHS

Dubai, Aug. 29: Indian captain Virat Kohli hit the nets for the first time in five months and so did white-ball deputy Rohit Sharma and a few other big names, beginning their preparations in earnest for the upcoming IPL in the UAE.

Despite coming off a long break, Kohli had a good hit in the nets which was also attended by South African pace leg-end Dale Steyn and RCB team director Mike Hesson, among others.

Hesson was seen interacting with both Kohli and Steyn.
"Been 5 months since

the last time I stepped onto the field. Felt like 6 days when I got into the nets. Great first session with the boys," Kohli

In Abu Dhabi, Rohit led his team into the ground and even as he batted, his pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah ran in to bowl some quick deliveries and get back his rhythm.

Meanwhile, Rajasthan Royals' fielding coach Dishant Yagnik has recovered from COVID-19 and joined his team here ahead of the Indian Premier League after clearing two consecutive coronavirus tests.

NATIONAL SPORTS | DAY

Players receive awards virtually

New Delhi, Aug. 29: India's sporting heroes were bestowed the annual national awards in an unparalleled online ceremony amid the COVID-19 pandemic during which athletes logged in from multiple cities to be honmultiple cities to be honoured by President Ram Nath Kovind.

This year a whopping 74 were picked for the national honours, including an unprecedented five Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratnas and 27

Arjuna awardees.

Of these, 60 attended the virtual ceremony conducted across 11 Sports Authority of India (SAI) contree in vertices efficient efficiency of the second of centres in various cities.

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

the Coronavirus.
The other three Khel
Ratna winners — table tennis player Manika Batra, Paralympic gold-medallist Mariyappan Thangavelu and women's hockey team captain Rani Rampal attended the ceremony.

While Batra logged in attack in Bengaluru. He from Pune, Thangavelu was 79. — PTI

Bengaluru

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

Missing, however, was the grandeur of the Rashtrapati Bhavan's Durbar Hall.

Sports minister Kiren Rijiju on Saturday defended his government's decision to confer a record 74 National Sports Awards this year, including an unprecedented five Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna honours, a move which faced severe criticism from all quarters.

RIJIJU CONDOLES

RAI'S DEATH
Rijiju on Saturday condoled the death of veteran athletics Purushottam Rai, who was to receive this year's Dronacharya award in the

lifetime category. Rai, who was to be bestowed the honour on Saturday and had even parrehearsal for the first-ofits-kind virtual ceremony, died on Friday evening after suffering a heart

MASSIVE HIKE IN PRIZE

New Delhi, Aug. 29: Sports minister Kiren Rijiju on Saturday officially announced a massive hike in the prize money in four of the seven categories of the National Sports and Adventure Awards.

The prize money for the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award has been increased to a whopping ₹25 lakh from the previous amount of ₹7.5 lakh, while Arjuna Award

has been enhanced to ₹15 lakh from ₹5 lakh.

The Dhronacharya (Lifetime) awardees, who were earlier given ₹5 lakh, will now be richer by ₹15 lakh, while Dhronacharya (Regular) winners will be given ₹10 lakh instead of ₹5 lakh.

The prize money of Dhyan Chand Award has been increased to ₹10 lakh from ₹5 lakh. The hike will come into effect from this year. — PTI

14-year struggle paid off: Dutee

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO Dutee Chand was

Ace sprinter from Odisha Dutee Chand, who was on Saturday conferred with the prestigious Arjuna Award for the year 2020, said her struggle had brought her 'sweet success-

es and recognitions'.
"My 14 years of struggle and hard work has brought me enough successes and recognition. This Arjun Award is a very special recognition for me. Every sportsperson cherishes a dream to get it in his lifetime," Dutee said while receiving the award from President Ram Nath Kovind.

The athlete who in the past faced questions on her gender and was banned temporarily from international events thanked followers and supporters for standing by her during hard times.

She also took to microblogging site Twitter and wrote, "Grateful and proud of my journey till now. Lots to achieve still. Let's

sportspersons to have been selected for the Arjuna Award. With this, she became the ninth Arjuna awardee from

Odisha. get to work!"

The sprint queen of India was nominated for the award in the discipline of athletics. She was among 27 sportspersons to have been selected for the Arjuna Award. With this, she became the ninth Arjuna Odisha. awardee from

Earlier, eight sportspersons from Odisha have won the Arjuna Award. They include Minati Mohapatra (cyclist), Bijay Kumar Satpathy (weightlifter), Rachita Mistry (athlete), Dilip Tirkey (hockey), Jyoti Sunita Kullu (hockey), Ignace Tirkey (hockey), K. Ravi Kumar (weightlifter), and Pramod Bhagat (para-badminton).

Raina's absence a big blow for CSK and IPL

Saturday ahead of the Belgian Grand Prix.

Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton celebrates as he stands on his

car after securing his 93rd pole position during the quali-

fying session at the Spa-Francorchamps circuit in Spa on



Ayaz Memon

Over The Top

tar player Suresh Raina pulling out of the IPL for 'personal reasons' just a day after a clutch of people attached to the Chennai Super Kings squad in the UAE tested positive for Covid made it a double

whammy for the franchise and the league. On Friday evening, news emerged from Dubai that several from the CSK group had tested positive. Identities and precise num-

ber of those infected by the

virus was not clarified by

either the franchise or the

BCCI. In these excruciating circumstances this is neither smart nor desir-

On Saturday afternoon, the BCCI finally put out an official release, confirming that 13 people associated with the tournament players, support staff, management, etc — had tested positive. The release, how-ever, did not still identify those afflicted.

Nor did the franchise (assuming CSK is the only affected party), which created more questions than were answered. Raina

returning home for rea- ties of those infected. It sons unknown exacerbated

The franchise was perhaps looking to do damage control, and the BCCI for a full status report before going public. Both understandable in ordinary circumstances. But secrecy in these times is an invitation to wild speculation.

The BCCI did clarify though that all 13 who tested positive "as well as their close contacts are asymptomatic and have been isolated from other team members". They will be attended to by the IPL medical This is in keeping with

standard operating proce-That prompt action has been taken is also reassur-ing, but I still can't fathom

the need to hide the identi-

tinges the situation unnecessarily with controversy. More importantly, it is unfair on everybody else involved in the tournament.

It is unclear what 'personal reasons' prompted Raina to return. There could be some other compelling grounds, but for argument's sake, it is per-fectly reasonable if this was because of Covidrelated anxiety too.
Since the time big time

cricket resumed in June, players have been given the series/tournament or not, without fear of recrimina-tion. Three West Indies Shimron olayers Hetmyer, Darren Bravo and Kemo Paul — skipped

the tour to England for per-

sonal safety.

Dread of the Coronavirus is not misplaced, and players cannot be faulted for prioritising their families and themselves over cricket. That elite athletes are immune to Covid 19 because of their supreme fitness, has been shown to

be a fallacy. Tennis world no.1 Novak Djokovic, among the fittest sportspersons on the plantested positive (along with some other players) during the ill-fated Adria Tour he organized a few months back.

Djokovic had cavalierly underplayed the Covid threat. Players on the Adria Tour mixed with spectators, in fact even attended after match parties where social distancing was completely disregarded. The consequences were harrowing.

This brings us back to the issue of the 13 people in the IPL who have tested positive in the UAE. How did this happen when they had cleared everything that the bio-secure bubble protocol demanded before leaving for the gulf a week back, as also in the time there subsequently before the tests calamitous

Was it that the tests done in India or the earlier ones in UAE, were erratic? This not impossible. Remember Mohammed flip-flop test Hafeez's results before he was cleared to join the Pakistan team to England? Was the problem then in the diagnostic analyses done earli-

Or is it because these people came in contact with carriers of Corona in some

a loophole in the bio-secure bubble, or a contravention of laid down SOPs? This becomes a far more serious issue if true.

Whatever the cause, events of the past couple of days should set alarm bells clanging violently in the BCCI. There clearly needs to be a more diligent implementation of the SOPs with the active and total participation of franchise owners/management, players, support staff et al. The vigil has to be strict,

and even the most minor transgression — by any-body — has to be treated unsparingly.

If the problem is not arrested asap, the league itself could collapse. Worse, it would also imperil India's tour of Australia scheduled at the year-end.