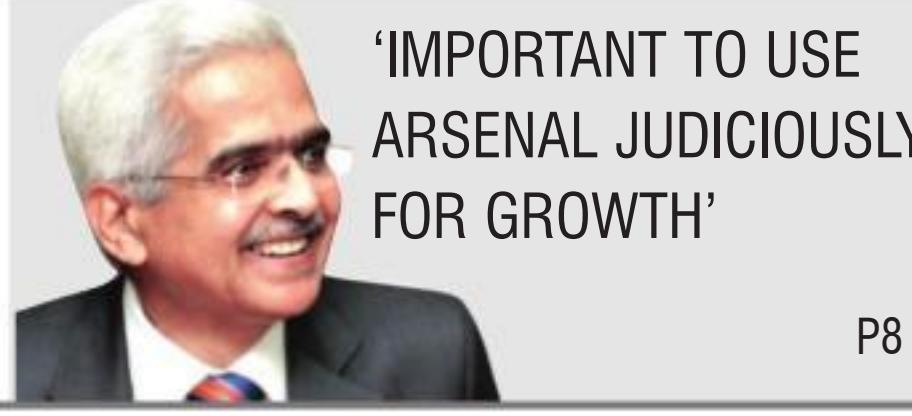




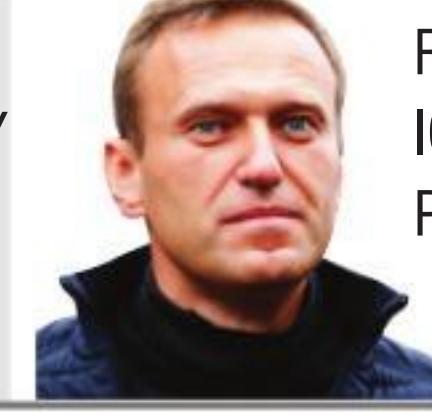
'WORLD FACES  
UNPARALLELED  
CHALLENGE'

P5



'IMPORTANT TO USE  
ARSENAL JUDICIOUSLY  
FOR GROWTH'

P8



PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION

RUSSIA'S NAVALNY IN  
ICU AFTER ALLEGED  
POISONING

GNABRY DOUBLE  
SENDS BAYERN  
INTO CL FINAL

P9



P12

WEATHER

Generally cloudy sky with light rain/thundershowers. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 32 and 25 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: 008.2 mm

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 100% Min: 94%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 29.0°C (-5) Min: 24.1°C (-2)

SUN RISES SUN SETS

05:54 hrs 18:54 hrs

MOON RISES MOON SETS

09:07 hrs 20:47 hrs

THUMBNAILS



Idol of Lord Ganesha in a workshop ahead of Ganesh Chaturthi, in the Capital on Thursday.

DEEPAK

**Punjab imposes daily night curfew:** Amid rising coronavirus cases, Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Thursday ordered a series of emergency measures, including extension of weekend lockdown, with daily night curfew from 7 pm to 5 am in all 167 cities and towns in the state from 21 August. Besides, the CM also ordered a total ban on all gatherings except weddings and funerals across the state till 31 August.

P3

**Gmail glitch resolved:** Google on Thursday said its Gmail service has been restored for some users and the outage issue will be resolved for all affected users "in the near future", hours after the popular emailing service faced a global disruption since this morning. Some users faced issues like inability to log in, add attachments and receive messages, but the company is yet to specify a reason for the outage.

Indore 'cleanest' for fourth time

BHOPAL, 20 AUGUST

Indore city in Madhya Pradesh grabbed the award for the cleanest city of India for the fourth time in a row in the 'Swachh Survekshan 2020' results announced by the union government at New Delhi Thursday.

Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri announced the results at a ceremony held virtually due to the COVID-19 situation.

The state capital Bhopal also secured the seventh rank in the country in terms of clean cities with population over 10 lakh.

Indore scored 5647.56 points in the survey.

Bhopal achieved a score of 5066.31 points.

Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri tweeted, "Heartiest congratulations! Indore is India's cleanest city 4th year in a row. The city & its people have shown exemplary dedication towards cleanliness. Congratulations to MP CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan, people, political leadership & Municipal Corporation for this superlative performance."

Attending the award ceremony virtually from Bhopal, MP CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan extended heartiest greetings to the people, public representatives and officials of Indore and the entire state.

Chouhan said Indore has scored a four and now it has to score a six too in the coming years.

This was the fifth edition of the annual cleanliness survey of the country.

According to the union ministry's website, 1.87 crore citizens participated in the survey of 4242 cities, 62 cantonment boards and 92 towns along the Ganga river.

Dhoni illustration of new India where family name doesn't make destiny: Modi



SNS & PTI  
NEW DELHI, 20 AUGUST

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has described Mahendra Singh Dhoni as the embodiment of a new India where family name does not make one's destiny in a letter to the enigmatic former captain, who retired from international cricket last week.

Thankful Dhoni shared the letter on his Twitter page on Thursday, his first social media post since the "consider me retired" note on Instagram that stunned the cricket fraternity on Saturday.

Dhoni, who is also an Honorary Lieutenant Colonel in the Territorial Army, thanked the PM for the appreciation.

"You have been one of the important illustrations of the spirit of new India, where family name does not make young people's destiny but they make their own names and their own destinies," wrote the PM in his letter Dhoni.

"Where we come from does not matter as long as we know where we are headed -- this is the spirit that you have exuded and inspired many youngsters with," he said.

Dhoni, who is also an Honorary Lieutenant Colonel in the Territorial Army, thanked the PM for the appreciation.

An Artist, Soldier and Sportsperson what they crave for is appreciation, that their hard work and sacrifice is getting noticed and appreciated by everyone, thanks PM @narendramodi for your appreciation and good wishes," he wrote.

"No matter what hairstyle you sported, your calm head remained the same in victory or defeat, which is very important for every youth," he said referring to different hair cuts that Dhoni made famous--an eye-catching long mane at the beginning of his career.

The apex court judge Justice Arun Mishra told Prashant Bhushan, during the hearing on his sentencing, that there is a 'Lakshman Rekha' for everything, alluding to a set of norm or convention that should never be broken.

A bench headed by Justice Mishra told Bhushan, "If you do not balance your com-

ments, then you will destroy the institution, and the court does not punish for contempt so easily." "Balancing has to be there; restraint has to be there. There is a Lakshman Rekha for everything. Why should you cross the Rekha?"

said Justice Mishra.

Bhushan contended that he had fought cases in the apex court for public interest some personal and professional cost and insisted that his tweets were not done in a fit of absent-mindedness.

Justice Mishra said the court welcomes pursuing good cases in public interest. "I haven't convicted anyone of contempt in over 20 years as a judge. This is my first such order," said Justice Mishra.

63-day-old Bengal baby survives Corona

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, 20 AUGUST

This is possibly the youngest Covid survivor across the country. The patient had severe Covid-19 infection

DR PRABHAS GIRI

A MEMBER OF THE TEAM OF DOCTORS

A team of doctors gave a new lease of life to a 63-day-old baby at the Institute of Child Health (ICH) in the city and claimed that the patient was the youngest novel coronavirus survivor in the country.

The baby was discharged from the ICH hospital today after he tested COVID-19 negative before going home to Contai in East Midnapore.

On 28 July, he was rushed to the hospital with high fever and severe respiratory trouble.

Considering his critical condition Dr Kheya Ghosh, in charge of neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) at the

newborns and babies are hardly vulnerable to viral infections," said Dr Ghosh.

"His swab sample test result was COVID positive and then we decided to shift the patient to the Medical College Hospital (MCH) for treatment because our hospital is a non-COVID healthcare unit. But his condition was too critical to shift him there," she said.

"Fearing the virus might spread among other newborns in the NICU we shifted him to our non-COVID isolation ward where he had undergone treatment with the support of a prone ventilator for more than eight days. He tested COVID negative in the second confirmatory test

before we discharged him today.

Interestingly, his parents tested COVID negative," she added.

"This is possibly the youngest COVID survivor across the country. The patient had severe COVID-19 infection aggravating his condition. Usually, newborns at this age group are not vulnerable to such type of coronavirus infection and this raised our eyebrows," said Dr Prabhas Giri, a member of the team of doctors.

"It is an achievement of our team of doctors and nurses who risked their lives to give this newborn a fresh lease of life," said Dr Apurba Ghosh, ICH director.

Tharoor-led MP panel on IT summons Facebook on 2 Sept

SNS & PTI  
NEW DELHI, 20 AUGUST

The parliamentary standing committee on Information Technology has summoned Facebook on 2 September to discuss the issue of alleged misuse of social media platforms in the wake of claims that the US firm did not apply hate speech rules to certain BJP politicians.

Besides the representatives of Facebook, the committee has also asked representatives of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology to remain present on September 2 to discuss the subject of "safeguarding cit-

izens' rights and prevention of misuse of social/online news media platforms including special emphasis on women security in the digital space".

The notification came on a day when a senior member of the committee and BJP leader Nishikant Dubey wrote to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla seeking removal of Shashi Tharoor as the panel's chairman, alleg-

ing that the Congress leader was using the platform for a political agenda.

For the September meeting, representatives of ministries of communications and home affairs have been called, as also those from Bihar, Jammu and Kashmir and Delhi governments, according to the agenda notifications issued by the Lok Sabha Secretariat.

Representatives of Information and Broadcasting Ministry, News Broadcasters Association, Press Council of India and Prasar Bharati have been invited for the discussion on 'Ethical Standards in Media Coverage'.



India: Recovery rate nears 74 per cent

SNS&PTI  
NEW DELHI, 20 AUGUST

Recoveries among Covid-19 patients in the country surged to 20,96,664 on Thursday, pushing India's recovery rate to 73.91 per cent, while only 0.28 per cent of 6,86,395 active cases are on ventilator support, the Union health ministry said.

Of the active cases of coronavirus infection, 1.92 percent are in ICU and 2.62 percent on oxygen support. The country's case fatality rate has further declined to 1.90 per cent, it said.

Recovery of 20,96,664 patients has been made possible because of effective implementation of the policy of testing aggressively, tracking comprehensively and treating efficiently, the ministry said in a statement.

"Focus on the standard of care protocol including the use of non-invasive oxygen, better-skilled doctors in the ICUs and hospitals and improved ambulance services have culminated in yielding the desired results," it said.

With 58,794 recoveries in a span of 24 hours, India's recovery rate amongst Covid-19 patients has reached nearly 74 per cent (73.91 per cent) reflecting that the number of patients recovering is on a steady rise over the past several months, it added.

India has posted 14,10,269 more recoveries than active cases. There are 6,86,395 active cases of coronavirus infection which are under active medical care.

The record high recoveries have ensured that the active cases, the "actual case-load" of the country, currently comprise only 24.19 per cent of the total cases.

Early identification through



testing, surveillance and contact tracing along with the focus on the timely and appropriate clinical treatment of COVID-19 patients have ensured that not only is the case fatality rate lower than the global average and progressively declining but also a small proportion of the active cases are on ventilator support, the ministry said.

India's COVID-19 case-load increased to 28,36,925 with a record single-day spike of 69,652 infections, while the death toll climbed to 53,866 with 977 fresh fatalities being reported in a day, official data updated at 8 am showed.

The total cases of coronavirus infections mounted to 28,36,925, while the death toll climbed to 53,866 with 977 new fatalities being reported in a day, the data updated at 8 am showed.

India's Covid-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on 7 August.



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 20 AUGUST

Holding advocate Prashant Bhushan guilty of contempt of court, the Supreme Court on Thursday said freedom of speech is not absolute for anyone.

The remarks were made during the hearing on sentencing of Bhushan, who was found guilty of contempt of court for his tweets making derogatory remarks against the judiciary.

The apex court judge Justice Arun Mishra told Prashant Bhushan, during the hearing on his sentencing, that there is a 'Lakshman Rekha' for everything, alluding to a set of norm or convention that should never be broken.

A bench headed by Justice Mishra told Bhushan, "If you do not balance your com-

sents, then you will destroy the institution, and the court does not punish for contempt so easily." "Balancing has to be there; restraint has to be there. There is a Lakshman Rekha for everything. Why should you cross the Rekha?"

Justice Mishra said the court welcomes pursuing good cases in public interest. "I haven't convicted anyone of contempt in over 20 years as a judge. This is my first such order," said Justice Mishra.

Bhushan contended that he had fought cases in the apex court for public interest some personal and professional cost and insisted that his tweets were not done in a fit of absent-mindedness.

Justice Mishra said the court welcomes pursuing good cases in public interest. "I haven't convicted anyone of contempt in over 20 years as a judge. This is my first such order," said Justice Mishra.

For the September meeting, representatives of ministries of communications and home affairs have been called, as also those from Bihar, Jammu and Kashmir and Delhi governments, according to the agenda notifications issued by the Lok Sabha Secretariat.

Representatives of Information and Broadcasting Ministry, News Broadcasters Association, Press Council of India and Prasar Bharati have been invited for the discussion on 'Ethical Standards in Media Coverage'.



The people of Gujarat accepted the insistence and appeal for cleanliness from state's two sons, Mahatma Gandhi and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and helped place four of its cities in the top 10 in the country

VIJAY RUPANI  
GUJARAT CHIEF MINISTER

## Pleas in HC against election of Kejriwal, Vijender Gupta

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 20 AUGUST

Two pleas have been moved in the Delhi High Court challenging the elections of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and BJP leader Vijender Gupta to the Delhi assembly on the ground that they allegedly furnished false information regarding their poll expenses.

The petitions were listed before Justice C Hari Shankar who on Thursday renominated them for hearing on November 25 after the petitioner did not appear for arguments even after the matters were taken up twice for hearing via video conferencing.

**The petitions were listed before Justice C Hari Shankar who on Thursday renominated them for hearing on November 25 after the petitioner did not appear for arguments even after the matters were taken up twice for hearing via video conferencing.**

Kejriwal, the petitioner said he had contested against the AAP chief in the assembly elections held this year.

The plea against Gupta has been filed by Khatri as a voter of the constituency -- Rohini Assembly Constituency 13 -- from where the BJP leader contested and won.

In both his pleas, the petitioner has claimed that neither of the political leaders disclosed accurate day-to-day expenses of their poll campaign in the expenditure register.

He has also alleged that both of them spent money way beyond the prescribed limit under the law and the excess expenditure was not disclosed to the returning officer.

# Serosurvey: 29.1 pc Delhi'ites have antibodies for Covid-19

Delhi's latest serosurvey indicates that 29 pc of the city's population has recovered after being infected by Covid but 71 pc continue to be vulnerable to coronavirus, says health minister Satyendar Jain

SNS & PTI  
NEW DELHI, 20 AUGUST

Over 29 per cent of the people tested in the second serosurvey conducted in Delhi were found to have developed antibodies against the novel coronavirus (Covid-19), Delhi health minister Satyendar Jain said today.

The outcome of this latest serosurvey, conducted across the national capital early this month, indicates that around 29.1 per cent of Delhi's population has been exposed to

Covid-19, Jain said. It suggests that around 60 lakh people in Delhi -- given that the city's population is 2 crore -- have antibodies and have thus already recovered after being infected by coronavirus.

Jain told a press conference that 15,000 representative samples were taken in the August 1-7 survey from all 11 districts of Delhi and that the next serosurvey exercise will begin in the city from 1 September.

"In the previous survey, it was found that over 22 percent people had developed antibodies. Now, the August survey shows it is 29.1 per cent, meaning they had got infected and recovered," Jain said.

He said that the prevalence of antibodies found in males



was 28.3 per cent, and in females 32.2 per cent in the latest survey.

The previous seroprevalence survey conducted from June 27 to July 10 by the Delhi government in association with the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), had used 21,387 samples and found that around 23 per cent of the people surveyed had an exposure to the novel coronavirus.

"The rise, rather than the exponential rise is not there. So, people are taking safety precautions it seems. But, we cannot afford to be complacent and lower our guard, even though positivity rate at present is 7 per cent," Jain said.

He said: "Different kinds of prevalence has been observed

The exercise was undertaken for a comprehensive assessment of the Covid situation in Delhi and to formulate strategies based on its findings. About 15,000 samples were collected from across Delhi as part of this exercise, spanning different areas and age groups, gender and economic class, the health minister said.

Of the total samples, 25 per cent were taken from the age group of less than 18 years, another 50 per cent from 18-49 years category and remaining 25 per cent from those in the age group of 50 years or more, the minister said.

Jain said, "This serosurvey has been done considering the overall 2 crore

population of Delhi... It is relieving to know that over 29 per cent of the city's population has recovered after being infected from the coronavirus."

Delhi. The difference between the first and the second sero-survey ranges anywhere between 6 per cent and 50 per cent. The overall increase rate from the previous survey is 25-26 per cent."

Jain said, "This serosurvey has been done considering the overall 2 crore

population of Delhi... It is relieving to know that over 29 per cent of the city's population has recovered after being infected from the coronavirus."

In this serosurvey, the lowest rise was found in North-East district, from 27.7 per cent (last survey) to 29 per cent (August survey), thus an increase of 6.7 per cent, Jain said.

In South-East district, the rise in prevalence is from 22 per cent in the previous exercise to 33 per cent in the current one, an increase of 50 per cent, he said.

"Sero-prevalence of antibodies found in age group of less than 18 was 34.7 per cent, in 18-50 years 28.5 per cent, and 31.2 per cent in 50 years and above," Jain said.

He said he had suggested taking a larger sample than used in the previous exercise, but scientists and experts at the Maulana Azad Medical College (MAMC), which led the survey team, had decided to keep 15,000 as the representative sample size based on their assessment.

"The findings also mean that 71 per cent still have chances of getting (coronavirus) infection. Also, experts say, herd immunity is said to have been built in community if 40-50 per cent or more develop antibodies, so we have to be still very watchful," Jain said.

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

Asked if opening of shops and malls in the city could lead to increase in cases, Jain said

this exercise has shown that the rise has been of 25 per cent compared to the last time, so it could be 50 per cent increase next due to opening of businesses.

On longevity of antibodies developed in response to Covid, he said, according to experts these antibodies can last for several months, say 5-8 months, but the body also produces T-cells in response to the infection.

These T-cells, also called memory cells, help fight any possible infection again, and so it is "very rare" that a person who has recovered from Covid will be diagnosed with it again.

Delhi had yesterday identified 1,398 fresh cases of Covid that took the cumulative total of such patients to 1,56,139 in the city.

The cumulative total of recovered Covid patients in the national capital was then 1,40,767.

The Covid recovery rate was 90.15 per cent.

The national capital had yesterday recorded 9 Covid deaths, which pushed its death toll

to 4,235. The active cases tally was 11,137 and the positivity rate stood at 6.7 per cent.

The total number of coronavirus tests conducted in Delhi stood at 13,58,189 till yesterday.

The number of tests done per million was 71,483. The city had then 560 containment zones.

## Classified

CHANGE OF NAME

### PUBLIC NOTIFICATIONS

I HAVE Changed my name from Mirakshi Jain to Meenakshi Jain in future for all purpose. This same is mentioned in my Aadhar/Pan Card. INDL68543435846285.

### AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before the Notary Public, Talcher on 02.07.2020, Iraja Singh, S/o Koral Singh, At: Q No. M/267, Nandira Colony, Talcher, P.S. Vikrampur, Dist: Angul, declare that correct name of my son is Indrajit Singh and his actual date of birth is 31.01.1999. The actual name of my wife is Ranjeet Kaur as per her Aadhaar Card. But in my Service Records the name of my son was mentioned as Indrajit Singh, date of birth as 31.1.98 instead of Indrajit Singh, date of birth 31.01.1999. So also the name of my wife as Ranjeet Kaur instead of Ranjeet Kaur. Hence, this affidavit, my wife Ranjeet Kaur @ Ranjeet Kaur and my son Indrajit @ Indrajit of the aforesaid residence is the one and same person. Hence, this affidavit.

Hira Singh

I, RAJESH Kumar, s/o Hakim Singh, i/o H.No. 2256, Gauampuri, Phase-I, Badarpur, New Delhi-44, declare that my son Amit Kumar is out of my control. We disown him from my all movable and immovable properties. I shall not be responsible for their acts.

MY CLIENTS Mrs. Sunita & Mr. Rajpal, Resident of TH-182, Gali No. 4, Ajit Nagar, Gandhi Nagar, Delhi-110031 are hereby severally their all relations with their son Mohit & his wife Smt. Aliya @ Radhika and their daughter. The said persons will not inherit any movable or immovable properties of my clients.

Inderjeet Singh Advocate H.No. 90, Ram Nagar Near Krishna Nagar, Delhi-51.

WE, VIJAY Kumar, s/o Ram Lal & Varsha Kathpal, w/o H. No. 3/38, Shivaji Nagar, Gurugram. Declare that our daughter Riya Katpal is out of our control. We disown her from our all movable immovable properties. Anybody deals with her at their own risk. We & our family are not responsible for any kind of act done by her.

Sd/-  
OIC, GGDC at Kaliganj

OFFICER-in-Charge, GGDC at Kaliganj, Debagram, Nadia, invites sealed tenders / quotations for providing Security Services at the College premises. For details including last date of submissions and other clarifications, consult the college website: www.kaligangjgovtcollege.org

Sd/-  
OIC, GGDC at Kaliganj

WE, VIJAY Kumar, s/o Ram Lal & Varsha Kathpal, w/o H. No. 3/38, Shivaji Nagar, Gurugram. Declare that our daughter Riya Katpal is out of our control. We disown her from our all movable immovable properties. Anybody deals with her at their own risk. We & our family are not responsible for any kind of act done by her.

Sd/-  
OIC, GGDC at Kaliganj

Hira Singh

## The Statesman

### KOLKATA

Statesman House, 4, Chowringhee Square Kolkata-700 001.  
Tel: (033) 22127070-76,  
(033) 41071700  
Fax: (033) 2212-6181 / 7107-1780  
Email: thestatesman@vsnl.com  
statesmandclassified@gmail.com

### DELHI

Statesman House, 148, Barakhamba Road, New Delhi-110 001 Tel: (011) 2331 5911  
Ishan House (2nd floor), A-90, Sector II, NOIDA, UP 201 301 Tel: (0120) 4171421  
Email: delhisatesman@gmail.com  
delhisatesman@vsnl.com

### BHUBANESWAR

Plot 3A, Zone B, Sector A, Mancheswar Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751 010.  
Tel: (0674) 2588060/61/62/2586371, Telefax: 0674-2588061  
Email: bhubaneswar@thestatesmangroup.com  
statesmanbbsr@gmail.com

### SILIGURI

13A, Dabgram Industrial Growth Centre, P.O. Satellite Township, Siliguri-734015  
Tel: 2568615, 2568063 and 2568787. Fax: (0353) 2568296, Email: siliguri@thestatesmangroup.com

City Office: 3rd Floor, Rina Bhawan, Opp. HDFC Bank, Panikanti More, Sevoke Rd., Siliguri-734015. Ph: 0353-2524077

### SHIMLA

Cabin No. 305, P. C. Chambers Near Jodha Niwas The Mall Shimla-171001, H.P.  
Tel: 0177-2815000  
Email: shimla@thestatesmangroup.com

### HYDERABAD

The Statesman Limited, 2nd Floor, UNI Building, A.C. Guards, Hyderabad-500004, Ph.: 040-2339 1739  
Email: hyderabad@thestatesmangroup.com

### BANGALORE

No. 68, First Floor, Gold Tower, 50 Residency Road, Bangalore-560025. Tel: 080-2229129, 080-22234813  
Email: bangalore@thestatesmangroup.com

### MUMBAI

5, Kasturi Buildings, Jamshedji Tata Road, Mumbai-400 020  
Tel: (022) 2202 1045, Email: mumbai@thestatesmangroup.com  
manuelfrancis@thestatesman.com

### CHENNAI

Fagun Mansion (4th floor), 26, Ethiraj Road, Chennai-600 008, Tel: (044) 28278037, 28224800  
Email: chennai@thestatesmangroup.com

### LUCKNOW

2/2, Butler Palace (Near Jopling Road), Lucknow-226 001, Ph.: (0522) 2206705  
Email: lucknow@thestatesmangroup.com

### RANCHI

11/C, Road#1, Ashoknagar, Ranchi - 834 002  
Fax: (0651) 2247054  
Email: ranchi@thestatesmangroup.com

AIR-SURCHARGE: Kathmandu - Rs. 2, Eastern Region - Re. 1  
All other stations in India - Re. 1

### PTI

NEW DELHI, 20 AUGUST

The Delhi High Court Thursday permitted two animal welfare organisations to be a part of the physical survey conducted by the Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) to examine the condition of animals in all the circuses in the country and provide food and medicines to those who are ill.

The high court said the representatives of Federation of Indian Animals Protection (FIAPO), which is a collection of 100 organisations, working towards the protection of animal rights for over a decade, and People for Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) are entitled to be part of the survey.

A bench of Justices Vipin Sanghi and Rajnish Bhattacharya said if during the survey, it is found by the board that any animal is ill or malnourished, it is open for the two organisations and government authorities to provide medicines, food and nourishment to the animals at the site of the circus itself.

The high court asked the board to file its report after conducting the physical sur-

vey.

While hearing two petitions by FIAPO and PETA, the high court also asked the officials of the circuses to cooperate in the survey process. FIAPO has challenged the constitutional validity of sections 21 to 27 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act so far as they permit exhibition and training of animals in relation to circuses.

While hearing two petitions by FIAPO and PETA, the high court also asked the officials of the circuses to cooperate in the survey process. FIAPO has challenged the constitutional validity of sections 21 to 27 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act so far as they permit exhibition and training of animals in relation to circuses.

The petition has sought a direction to the Centre to immediately notify the Performing Animals (Registration) Amendment Rules of 2018 which expressly prohibit training and exhibition of performing animals in circuses.

It has said these animals are very often used without requisite paperwork certifying

their fitness and added that on account of the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been numerous reports of animals being stranded as part of these circuses all over the country and being abandoned by their owners.

While hearing two petitions by FIAPO and PETA, the high court also asked the officials of the circuses to cooperate in the survey process. FIAPO has challenged the constitutional validity of sections 21 to 27 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act so far as they permit exhibition and training of animals in relation to circuses.

The petition has sought a direction to the Centre to immediately notify the Performing Animals (Registration) Amendment Rules of 2018 which expressly prohibit training and exhibition of performing animals in circuses.



Celebrate Ganesh Chaturthi in a grand way, but wear masks, maintain social distancing and use sanitizers as much as you can

PRAMOD SAWANT  
GOA CHIEF MINISTER

The Statesman  
NEW DELHI, FRIDAY 21 AUGUST 2020

03

# 27.7 pc positive for antibodies in Punjab containment zones

Ramping up anti-Covid measures, CM Amarinder Singh orders extension of weekend lockdown with daily night curfew besides a ban on all gatherings except weddings & funerals

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, 20 AUGUST

**A**s many as 27.7 per cent of the people in Punjab's containment zones have been found to be positive for Covid antibodies, indicating that they have already been infected and recovered from the novel coronavirus (Covid-19).

The findings of this sero-survey, submitted to Chief Minister Amarinder Singh during a Covid review meeting on Thursday, showed "severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2" (SARS-CoV-2) antibodies prevalence in the containment zones to be the highest at 40 per cent in Amritsar district, followed by 35.6 per cent in Ludhiana, 33.2 per cent in SAS Nagar (Mohali), 19.2 per cent in Patiala and 10.8 per cent in Jalandhar.

This was Punjab's first exclusive survey, and was conducted in five containment zones from 1 August to 17 August, in a systematically selected random sample population of 1250.

The earlier surveys were more generalised and were con-



ducted by the state government in coordination with Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).

The survey report came on the day when Delhi released its second Sero Survey findings, which showed nearly 29 per cent seroprevalence in the

national capital.

For this exclusive Punjab survey, the selected containment zones, which had reported the highest number of Covid cases, were located, one each, in Patiala, SAS Nagar, Ludhiana, Jalandhar and Amritsar districts.

The sample included 250 people from each zone, and from each of the selected households, one adult above the age of 18 was randomly chosen for the survey.

Overall, the seroprevalence of SARS-CoV-2 antibodies was found to be 27.7 per cent in Pun-

jab's containment zones where the highest number of Covid-19 cases had been reported.

However, in the remaining parts of the cities, prevalence of SARS-CoV-2 would be lower, and in the rural areas the prevalence would be much more lower than the urban

areas, as per the report of the survey, which was aimed at finding out the prevalence of SARS-CoV-2 antibodies (IgM/IgG) using Rapid Antibody Testing kits.

Meanwhile, in a bid to ramp up the state's Covid battle preparedness amid the spike in cases, the Punjab CM today ordered an increase in testing to 30,000 a day, with at least 10 persons in the immediate circle of every positive patient to be tested.

Four districts -- Amritsar, Jalandhar, Patiala and Ludhiana -- account for the majority of the 36000 plus cases in the state.

Calling for 'war-like preparedness' to deal with the massive Covid spike in the state, Amarinder also ordered a series of emergency measures, including extension of weekend lockdown with daily night curfew from 7 p.m. to 5 a.m. in all the 167 cities and towns in the state from tomorrow.

He has also ordered a total ban on all gatherings except weddings and funerals across the state till 31 August. Government and private offices will work at 50 per cent capacity till the end of this month.

sent application pending for being dealt with separately, it said.

A copy of this order be forwarded to S.P Garg, former Judge of Delhi High Court by e-mail, the tribunal said.

The applicant may furnish a set of papers or any further suggestions to the said Committee.

The tribunal was hearing a plea filed by Delhi resident Mahesh Chandra Saxena seeking direction that properly designed Rain Water Harvesting Systems (RWHS) in government buildings do not have proper design.

The plea said the effect that if these designs are used, underground water will be more contaminated as various pollutants mix up with the water to be harvested.

Roadside water is going to the sewer lines with contaminants which ultimately goes to the rivers, it said.

NGT asks panel to examine plea on rain water harvesting in Delhi



PTI  
NEW DELHI, 20 AUGUST

The National Green Tribunal Thursday directed a committee to look into a plea for installation of properly designed Rain Water Harvesting Systems (RWHS) in government buildings in the national capital.

A bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel said it has already formed a committee headed by ex-judge of the Delhi High Court to go into the issue of RWHS in Delhi, we request the said Committee to look into issues raised in this application and include its observation on the subject in its next report, the bench said.

Since the report of the Committee will be duly considered in the matter, it is not necessary to keep the pre-

Four booked for hoisting Khalistan flag in Sirsa

CHANDIGARH, 20 AUGUST

Haryana Police have arrested four miscreants on charges of allegedly trying to disrupt peace, brotherhood and communal harmony by hoisting a flag with 'Khalistan Zindabad' written on it at a village in the Kalarwali police station area in Sirsa district.

Giving this information on Thursday, a Haryana Police spokesperson said, "the arrested accused were identified as Rupinder Singh alias Rim, Yudhvir Singh alias Jony and Gurjeet, all residents of village Singhpura and Amar Sharma of Ward Number 3, Talwandi Sabo."

Two accused carried out the incident while the other two shot a video and posted on social media."

During the preliminary interrogation, accused Rupinder 'confessed' about having been involved in the disgraceful act after seeing a video on social media on 14 August.

A case under relevant sections of the IPC had been registered at Kalawali police station and a probe was underway, the spokesperson added. SNS

## HP to explore prospects of eco-tourism in villages

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 20 AUGUST

**Himachal Forest Minister said the department would utilize forest destination places for various activities such as bird watching, trekking, etc. and local people would be associated with it, so that their economy could also be strengthened**

nation places for various activities such as bird watching, trekking, etc. and local people would be associated with it, so that their economy could also be strengthened.

The Forest minister also directed the officers to develop the lakes of the State from tourism point of view.

Additional Chief Secretary Forest Sanjay Gupta, Principal Chief Conservator Forest Ajay Kumar, Principal Chief Conservator Wildlife Dr. Savita and Additional Chief Conservator Eco-tourism Dr. Sanjay Sood were also present in the meeting.

Woman gangraped in Himachal's Kangra

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 20 AUGUST

In a horrific incident, a 32-year-old woman was allegedly gangraped by seven men in Gaggal area of Kangra district in Himachal Pradesh on Wednesday night.

Police said the incident occurred when the woman was returning home and had sought a lift in the vehicle of the accused.

The accused allegedly took the woman to a secluded place in Salol near Gaggal and gangraped her. They later took the woman to a hotel in Mcleodganj where she was again gangraped by the accused," police said.

Police added that the victim woman filed a complaint today after which a hunt was launched to nab the accused.

All the seven accused were arrested by police and they will be produced before a local court tomorrow. The cops took the woman to a hospital for her medical examination.

The victim woman has been staying with her parents along with her three children.

## HP CM appeals to well-off to give up PDS subsidy

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 20 AUGUST

tributed under the Public Distribution System so that the poor and backward classes can avail the benefit of the scheme.

The department has already circulated the prescribed form to all Government offices and uploaded the same on the website of the Department.

The interested person can submit the form to the concerned inspector.

The ration card of the person/family surrendering the subsidy would be blocked by the department. Such an interested person/family can keep the ration card for other purposes.

The Chief Minister has appealed to the APL (Above Poverty Line) consumers to visit website food.hpl.nic.in or office of the Department for surrendering their subsidy under the 'Give up Subsidy' scheme.

For more information people can contact toll free number 1967.

## Shimla bettered past record to hit 65th rank in Swachh Survekshan

SANJEEV KUMAR  
SHIMLA, 20 AUGUST

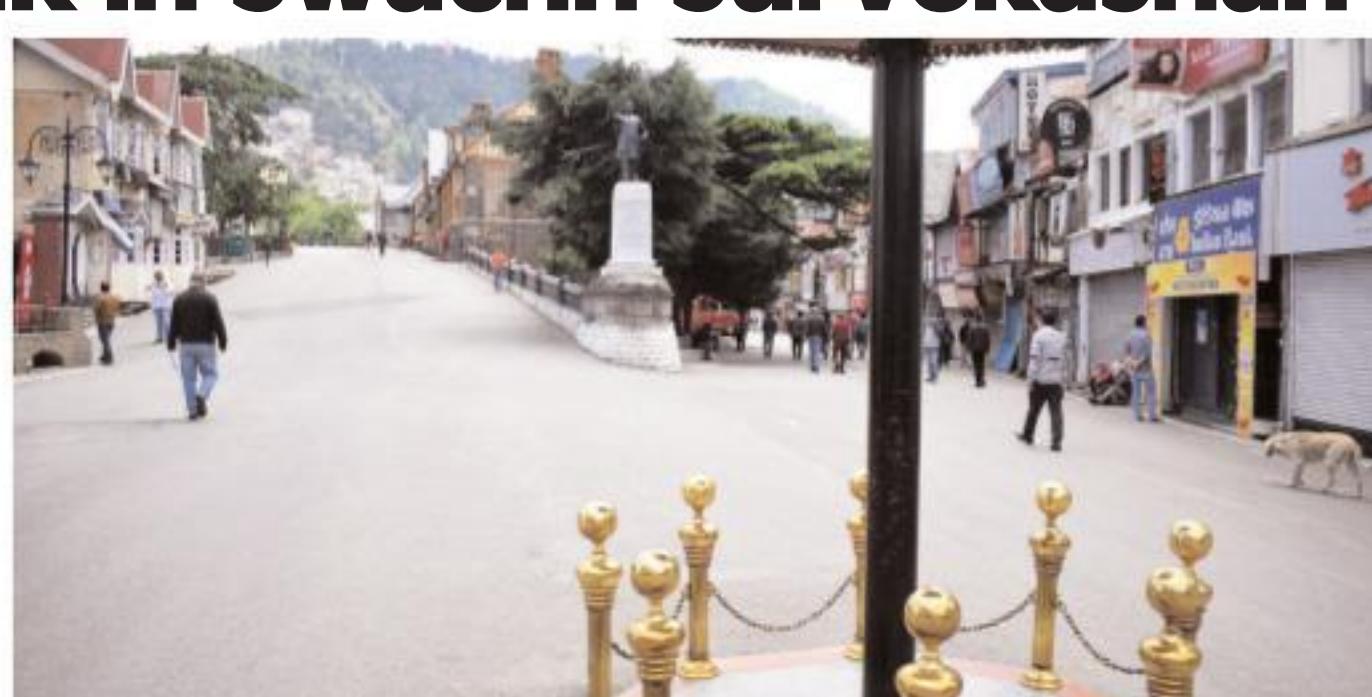
The 'Queen of Hills', Shimla, the capital city of Himachal Pradesh, has bettered its past record and jumped 63 notches to rank 65th cleanest city among the 4,242 cities in the country in Swachh Survekshan 2020.

Shimla with a population of 1.69 lakh has been adjudged cleanest among the 54 Urban Local bodies in the state and no other town of Himachal Pradesh figured in top 100 list of cleanest cities in the country.

Shimla had scored a total of 3,695.03 points out of the total 6,000 points in Swachh Survekshan whose results were declared today by Union Housing and Urban Affairs minister Hardeep Singh Puri and a total 3,514 citizens had participated in the survey.

It is worthwhile to mention here that Shimla was ranked 128th in 2019 survey whereas the hill city had scored 2,689 points out of the total 5,000 points.

The capital city of Himachal had performed better this year in three of the four Swachh Survekshan components, Service Level Progress (SLP) 1,214.87 points, Certification with 500 points and Citizen



Feedback 1,049.

In 2019 survey, the city had got 478.19 points in SLP 25 in Certification and 1,010.3 in Citizen Feedback benchmark.

However, the city's performance in Direct Observation had dipped to 930.64 as compared to last year's score of 1176 on the parameter.

Overall, Himachal among the states with less than 100 Urban Local Bodies, had ranked on 6th position as compared to 20th position in 2019 survey but the states were not categorised on the number of ULBs at that time.

In the category, Jharkhand had ranked first while Indore

in Madhya Pradesh had ranked cleanest city in the country for fourth consecutive year.

In the 2020 Swachh Survekshan, the ranking of towns with population less than 1 lakh had been done zone-wise and no towns of Himachal with population between 25 to 50,000 had figured in top 100 list.

Nahan town had ranked 147, Solan 159, Mandi 172, Baddi 185 and Paonta Sahib at 187 while towns with less than 25,000, Manali had ranked 477, Palampur 533 and Dharamshala, the winter capital of Himachal Pradesh, had ranked lowest at 629 position.

In Swachh Survekshan

ranking for cantonment boards, Dalhousie cantonment area in Chamba district ranked 9th and it had replaced Jutogh cantonment area in Shimla district in top 10 rankings.

Jutogh cantonment area was ranked at 3rd place in 2019 survey but this year, the area slipped 15 places to 18th position. Last year, Jutogh had scored 2,796 points as compared to 2611 points in 2020.

Among other cantonment boards, Dagshai cantonment area in Solan had been ranked 44th, Subathu at 49th, Bakloh at 51st, Kauli at 56th and Yol at 58th position.

**This GANESH CHATURTHI Bring your Ganesha home**

**In the fight against coronavirus, Celebrate Ganesh Chaturthi at home**

**No idol of Lord Ganesha shall be set up in the tent/pandal/public places.**

**People are advised to celebrate the festival at their homes.**

**Maintain social distancing of at least 2 yards.**

**If you step out of the house, wear a mask, carry a hand sanitizer and maintain social distancing.**

**Stay home and have a safe Ganesh Chaturthi!**

E-mail to CP, Delhi at: cp.snsrivastava@delhipolice.gov.in | Write to CP, Delhi at P.O. Box No. 171, GPO, New Delhi

FOR IMMEDIATE POLICE HELP CALL 112 | FOR HELPLINE SERVICES CALL 1090

DP/9251/2020



*It is abundantly clear that BJP govt is making desperate efforts to shield PM-CARES Fund from any kind of scrutiny*



SENIOR CONGRESS LEADER P CHIDAMBARAM  
RAISING QUESTIONS ON THE SETTING UP OF THE PM-CARES FUND

India

## T'gana BJP urges Govt to send report to Centre on Covid issue

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

HYDERABAD, 20 AUGUST

Telangana BJP has urged governor Tamiisai Soundararajan to send a report to the Centre on the Covid-19 situation in the state, including that the state government was hiding facts and misleading the central teams which had visited the state till date.

Meanwhile Andhra Pradesh has urged the devotees to avoid public celebrations during Ganapati festival and conduct pujas at home. The government has also banned immersion processions this year in view of the pandemic. Similarly, in Telangana too the Wakf Committee has come out with guidelines on observing Muharram.

The Hyderabad police is however firm that all celebrations or observation of mourning should take place at home though the state BJP has protested against the move.

The Telangana Panchayat department has threatened to initiate criminal proceedings against spouses or relatives of women elected representatives if found to be participating in meetings of Gram Panchayat, Mandal or Zilla Parishad.

He added that the BJP right from the beginning had been alleging that TRS government has been hiding facts about the pandemic either by not testing enough or by suppressing or manipulating statistics.

Following a candid interview to a national television channel by the governor where she remarked that the state government has underestimated the Covid-19 situation and ignored the 6 to 7 letters she had wrote on tackling pandemic the state BJP has suddenly found ammunition to attack the state government.

Writing to the governor Mr K Laxman former state BJP president pointed out: "As the state government continues to be nonchalant and callous towards protecting the lives of the people, your report to the Union will facilitate the intervention of the union government by weighing appropriate options."

## Manjhi quits Grand Alliance

HAM president looks set to return to Nitish company

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

PATNA, 20 AUGUST

In another significant development, former chief minister and Hindustani Awam Morcha (HAM) president Jitan Ram Manjhi today finally walked out of the Opposition Grand Alliance in Bihar, blaming the RJD for not taking note of his demand for formation of a coordination committee. Although he didn't announce his next course of action, Manjhi looks set to return to the company of chief minister Nitish Kumar who had served him humiliating treatment and finally threw him out of the JD-U five years back.

A decision to break alliance with the Grand Alliance was taken at a meeting of the core committee of HAM held at the residence of Manjhi.

"We had been constantly demanding the formation of a coordination committee but our demand was ignored," Manjhi's son and legislator Santosh Suman told newsmen today.

As such, Manjhi's move to walk out of the Opposition alliance had virtually become a formality since for the past



several months he had been constantly in touch with the chief minister. Manjhi not only met the chief minister more than twice but had also been heaping praises on him at regular intervals that saw him slowly getting isolated within the Grand Alliance. The result was the RJD stopped giving any importance to his observation or demand. Manjhi even tried to put pressure

on the RJD by reaching out to the top Congress leadership but the RJD refused to budge.

Interestingly, Manjhi looks headed for the party, the JD-U, which had pushed him out in a very humiliating manner in February 2015 after he had revolted against the chief minister. Subsequently, he formed his own party and became a part of the NDA but his party put up a disastrous

performance in the last 2015 assembly polls.

The RJD leadership slowly stopped taking note of his tantrums after Manjhi's HAM put up a disastrous performance in the last year's LS polls where it lost all the three seats. HAM's performance could be underlined from the fact that the Election Commission has now snatched its poll symbol of telephone for failing to garner four percent votes in the past elections.

Reports said the JD-U has offered 5 to 6 seats to HAM while he had been seeking more than 30 seats in the Grand Alliance. As such, Manjhi found his position in danger soon after another Dalit leader and JD-U minister Shyam Rajak returned to the RJD a couple of days back. On the other hand, the CM wanted someone to project as Dalit face of the JD-U after Rajak left while he already had been facing constant attacks from Dalit leader Ram Vilas Paswan who led the Lok Janshakti Party.

Meanwhile, three more JD-U legislators joined the JD-U today. They include Chandrika Rai, Faraz Fatmi and Jaivardhan Yadav.

## TN govt firm on decision to restrict Ganesh Chathurthi celebration

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

CHENNAI, 20 AUGUST

Despite Sangh Parivar's pressure, Tamil Nadu government sticks to its stance on restricting extended Ganesh Chathurthi celebration in the state, which is at present witnessing an aggressive spread of Covid-19 cases.

Tamil Nadu today recorded 5,986 new Covid-19 cases, taking the total number of infections in the state so far to 3,61,453. While the capital city Chennai registered 1,177 new infections in the last 24 hours, taking the total number of persons who tested positive for coronavirus in the metropolis so far to 1,21,450.

As many as 116 Covid-19 patients died, said the health department's bulletin today.

As far as Chennai's neighbouring districts are concerned, Chengalpattu today recorded 462 new cases, Kanchipuram registered 291 new infections and Thiruvallur 392 people tested positive.

However as many as 5,742

coronavirus patients were discharged from various hospitals in Tamil Nadu today after recovery.

Meanwhile, the Madras High Court today asked the state government whether it is possible to give relaxations to conduct Ganesh Chathurthi celebrations as the government stuck to its stance taken earlier.

The Court observed that the festival is being celebrated for several years. It has asked the government to respond tomorrow morning.

The order was issued based on a petition filed by L Ganapathy who sought permission to install Ganesh statues and to carry out procession to immerse the idols.

Meanwhile, after banning installation of idols on streets and on roads, Tamil Nadu government today asked people to celebrate Ganesh Chaturthi from their residences.

A circular on this regard was issued this morning. It requested the people to cooperate with the government.

## Delhi records 1215 fresh Covid cases, 22 deaths

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, 20 AUGUST

Delhi today reported 1,215 positive cases of Covid-19, which took the cumulative figure of coronavirus cases in the city to 1,57,354, according to the latest health bulletin issued by the Delhi government.

Twenty-two Covid fatalities were recorded in Delhi today, the health bulletin stated. This was reportedly the highest number of deaths since 7 August when the city recorded 23 Covid deaths.

ement. The sample tested for detecting fresh Covid cases numbered 17,004.

The number of deaths recorded last Tuesday and Wednesday was 12 and 9 respectively. The death toll due to Covid today mounted to 4,257 in the national capital.

The number of recovered Covid patients today was 1,059, which pushed the cumulative total

ofrecovered patients to 1,41,826. The recovery rate stood at 90.13 per cent. The bulletin stated that there were a total of 11,271 active coronavirus cases in Delhi. There were 5,707 Covid patients undergoing treatment under home isolation. The number of hospitalised cases was 4,349.

Due to poor response the date of bid submission for above NIT is extended as:

**Name of the Work:** Supply Installation, Testing and commissioning of 3 x 53.33 MVA Transformer Bank for Augmentation of Delina Grid station.

**A. E-Bid Submission (end) date & Time :-** 28.08.2020 upto 02.00 PM

**B. Online Commercial and Technical e-Bid opening date & Time :-** 31.08.2020 at 02.00 PM

**C. Online financial e-Bid opening date & time (Only of the technically qualified bidders) :-** Will be communicated to the Technically Qualified Bidders

**All other terms and conditions shall remain same as per attached SBD, BOQ and other documents uploaded on site.**

**Sd/- Executive Engineer**

**TLMD-VI, JKPTCL Bemina Sgr.**

**EXTENSION NOTICE-2**

**NIT No. TLMD-VI/ 01 of 2020-21(RETENDER),Dl.23-04-2020 (Extension Of Dates)**

**Due to poor response the date of bid submission for above NIT is extended as:**

**Name of the Work:** Supply Installation, Testing and commissioning of 3 x 53.33 MVA Transformer Bank for Augmentation of Delina Grid station.

**A. E-Bid Submission (end) date & Time :-** 28.08.2020 upto 02.00 PM

**B. Online Commercial and Technical e-Bid opening date & Time :-** 31.08.2020 at 02.00 PM

**C. Online financial e-Bid opening date & time (Only of the technically qualified bidders) :-** Will be communicated to the Technically Qualified Bidders

**All other terms and conditions shall remain same as per attached SBD, BOQ and other documents uploaded on site.**

**Sd/- Executive Engineer**

**TLMD-VI, JKPTCL Bemina Sgr.**

**EXTENSION NOTICE-2**

**NIT No. TLMD-VI/ 01 of 2020-21(RETENDER),Dl.23-04-2020 (Extension Of Dates)**

**Due to poor response the date of bid submission for above NIT is extended as:**

**Name of the Work:** Supply Installation, Testing and commissioning of 3 x 53.33 MVA Transformer Bank for Augmentation of Delina Grid station.

**A. E-Bid Submission (end) date & Time :-** 28.08.2020 upto 02.00 PM

**B. Online Commercial and Technical e-Bid opening date & Time :-** 31.08.2020 at 02.00 PM

**C. Online financial e-Bid opening date & time (Only of the technically qualified bidders) :-** Will be communicated to the Technically Qualified Bidders

**All other terms and conditions shall remain same as per attached SBD, BOQ and other documents uploaded on site.**

**Sd/- Executive Engineer**

**TLMD-VI, JKPTCL Bemina Sgr.**

**EXTENSION NOTICE-2**

**NIT No. TLMD-VI/ 01 of 2020-21(RETENDER),Dl.23-04-2020 (Extension Of Dates)**

**Due to poor response the date of bid submission for above NIT is extended as:**

**Name of the Work:** Supply Installation, Testing and commissioning of 3 x 53.33 MVA Transformer Bank for Augmentation of Delina Grid station.

**A. E-Bid Submission (end) date & Time :-** 28.08.2020 upto 02.00 PM

**B. Online Commercial and Technical e-Bid opening date & Time :-** 31.08.2020 at 02.00 PM

**C. Online financial e-Bid opening date & time (Only of the technically qualified bidders) :-** Will be communicated to the Technically Qualified Bidders

**All other terms and conditions shall remain same as per attached SBD, BOQ and other documents uploaded on site.**

**Sd/- Executive Engineer**

**TLMD-VI, JKPTCL Bemina Sgr.**

**EXTENSION NOTICE-2**

**NIT No. TLMD-VI/ 01 of 2020-21(RETENDER),Dl.23-04-2020 (Extension Of Dates)**

**Due to poor response the date of bid submission for above NIT is extended as:**

**Name of the Work:** Supply Installation, Testing and commissioning of 3 x 53.33 MVA Transformer Bank for Augmentation of Delina Grid station.

**A. E-Bid Submission (end) date & Time :-** 28.08.2020 upto 02.00 PM

**B. Online Commercial and Technical e-Bid opening date & Time :-** 31.08.2020 at 02.00 PM

**C. Online financial e-Bid opening date & time (Only of the technically qualified bidders) :-** Will be communicated to the Technically Qualified Bidders

**All other terms and conditions shall remain same as per attached SBD, BOQ and other documents uploaded on site.**

**Sd/- Executive Engineer**

**TLMD-VI, JKPTCL Bemina Sgr.**

**EXTENSION NOTICE-2**

**NIT No. TLMD-VI/ 01 of 2020-21(RETENDER),Dl.23-04-2020 (Extension Of Dates)**

**Due to poor response the date of bid submission for above NIT is extended as:**

**Name of the Work:** Supply Installation, Testing and commissioning of 3 x 53.33 MVA Transformer Bank for Augmentation of Delina Grid station.

**A. E-Bid Submission (end) date & Time :-** 28.08.2020 upto 02.00 PM

**B. Online Commercial and Technical e-Bid opening date & Time :-** 31.08.2020 at 02.00 PM

**C. Online financial e-Bid opening date & time (Only of the technically qualified bidders) :-** Will be communicated to the Technically Qualified Bidders

**All other terms and conditions shall remain same as per attached SBD, BOQ and other documents uploaded on site.**

**Sd/- Executive Engineer**

**TLMD-VI, JKPTCL Bemina Sgr.**

**EXTENSION NOTICE-2**

**NIT No. TLMD-VI/ 01 of 2020-21(RETENDER),Dl.23-04-2020 (Extension Of Dates)**

**Due to poor response the date of bid submission for above NIT is extended as:**

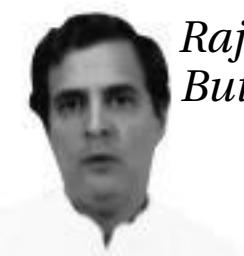
**Name of the Work:** Supply Installation, Testing and commissioning of 3 x 53.33 MVA Transformer Bank for Augmentation of Delina Grid station.

**A. E-Bid Submission (end) date & Time :-** 28.08.2020 upto 02.00 PM

**B. Online Commercial and Technical e-Bid opening date & Time :-** 31.08.2020 at 02.00 PM

**C. Online financial e-Bid opening date & time (Only of the technically qualified bidders) :-** Will be communicated to the Technically Qualified Bidders

**All other terms and conditions shall remain same as per attached SBD, BOQ and other documents uploaded on site.**



Rajiv Gandhi was a man with a tremendous vision, far ahead of his times.  
But above all else, he was a compassionate and loving human being

FORMER CONGRESS CHIEF RAHUL GANDHI  
WHILE PAYING RICH TRIBUTES TO THE FORMER PM ON HIS BIRTH ANNIVERSARY

The Statesman  
NEW DELHI, FRIDAY 21 AUGUST 2020

05

## THUMBNAILS



Madhura (R) wife of late classical vocalist Pandit Jasraj along with son Sharang Dev (C) and daughter Durga, pay their last respects before Jasraj's funeral in Mumbai on Thursday.

APP

**Successful deliveries by Covid-19 +ve mothers:** Raipur-based AIIMS has so far successfully conducted 15 deliveries by Covid-19 positive women. A 34-year-old Covid-19 positive mother with hypothyroidism delivered a baby girl through cesarean operation on Independence Day. Both mother and the infant are hale and hearty.

SNS

**Raj BJP seeks explanation:** The Rajasthan unit of the BJP on Thursday sought an explanation from four MLAs, who were absent during the trust-vote in the Assembly on Friday last despite a whip. The MLAs were called to Jaipur. The Ashok Gehlot government had moved a motion of confidence on Friday and if the BJP had demanded a division, only 68 from BJP would have voted instead of 73 and it could embarrass party.

PTI

**NC leaders meet at Farooq's house**

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, 20 AUGUST

After more than a year after they were detained following abrogation of the Article 370, four senior National Conference (NC) leaders on Thursday attended a meeting convened by party president Farooq Abdullah at his residence.

This is the first meeting of top leaders of NC leaders after 5 August last year when most Opposition leaders were detained by the government.

Replying to a habeas corpus petition recently filed in the HC by Farooq Abdullah and Omar Abdullah seeking release of these leaders, the J&K administration denied party's claim that many of were in illegal confinement at their homes.

**Covid-19 curve slowing down: Assam minister**

Over 2,000 people were released after medical attentions in the past 24 hours, taking the total tally to 60,348. At present, the state has 23,753 active Covid-19 cases as it lost 213 individuals to Covid-19 complications till Thursday afternoon.

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
GUWAHATI, 20 AUGUST

The Covid-19 curve in Assam is showing a decline trend as the state continues to discharge more people infected with the dreaded virus from hospitals.

Over 2,000 people were released after medical attentions in the past 24 hours, taking the total tally to 60,348. At present, the state has 23,753 active Covid-19 cases as it lost 213 individuals to Covid-19 complications till Thursday afternoon.

State health minister Himanta Biswa Sarma informed that days back the doubling rate was observed in 11 days and then rose to 15 and lately to 17. It indicates that gradually the curve is declining.

The state along with Mizoram, Sikkim, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh, recorded a lowest mortality rate (0.25%). Among Assam districts Kamrup (Metropolitan), Dibrugarh, Tinsukia and Cachar have shown highest mortality rate.

# World faces unparalleled challenge: Jaishankar

Says global loss due to Covid-19 pandemic could be largest since Great Depression

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 20 AUGUST

**O**berving that the impact of Covid-19 has been beyond the collective imagination of the global community, external affairs minister S Jaishankar today said the cumulative loss due to the pandemic could be in the range of \$5.8-\$8.8 trillion or about 6.5 per cent ~ 9.7 per cent of the global GDP as per current estimates.

"The contraction of the world economy being predicted will surely be the largest since the Great Depression (the history's worst economic downturn from 1929 to 1939)," he said at the 6th roundtable of the ASEAN-India Network of Think Tanks (AINTT).

The world, the minister said, faced an unprecedented challenge posed by coronavirus. "None of us has seen a crisis of this proportion before, or, indeed, uncertainty of this level. How, when and with what result this pandemic will end is an open question. Even after several months, the true extent of its destruc-



tion in terms of losses of lives and livelihood remains unclear. We cannot pretend this is just another happening, only bigger," he added.

Jaishankar said, what the pandemic brought out was the invisible aspect of human existence that underpinned globalisation.

"Whether it is climate change, terrorism or indeed pandemics, these are not challenges where those affected will end is an open question. Even after several months, the true extent of its destruc-

tions, the limitations of purely national responses or some-

times living in denial have become evident. It, therefore, underlines the need for the international community to work together much more sincerely in search of collective solutions," he added.

He said the big issue that confronted the thinking world was not simply the state of the economy, the damage to societies or the challenges to governance. It was actually a debate on the future directions of global affairs and what kind of world order - or disorder - the human race was going to live in.

The foreign minister said the commodity that was perhaps most valued in international relations today was that of trust.

"We had already seen in many quarters national security being redefined to include economic security. More recently, this then led to questions and concerns about technology security."

The pandemic has now added to that the importance of health security.

In fact, the concept of strategic autonomy that was once fashionable in a unipo-

lar world has now assumed relevance once again in terms of global supply chains. "Whatever we may profess, the actions of nations during times of crisis determines how the world really perceives them, and they did bring up many of the risks inherent in the current global economy."

Consequently, concerns about supply chains are sought to be mitigated at the very least through greater emphasis on their diversification and resilience," he added.

Meanwhile, to minimise the spread of Covid-19 in eye care facilities, the Health Ministry has issued guidelines that encourage consultations and following an appointment system for those needing investigations and procedures, adds PTI.

The ministry said eye care facilities in containment zones shall remain closed.

According to the Guidelines on Safe Ophthalmology Practices in Covid-19 Scenario, eye drops should be put in the patient's eye by a nursing or paramedical staff with a no touch technique.

## Modi's I-Day speech faces CPM flak



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 20 AUGUST

des, successive governments have neglected public health and government expenditure on health is barely one per cent of the GDP.

With the pandemic still raging in India, the Modi government should have announced a health infrastructure plan of at least Rs 1 lakh crore for the states and the Centre with the aim of expanding and upgrading public health system. But the PM announced a digital health card ID for all that will link up medical re-

cords of each person, the editorial said.

"This bypasses the real problem which is the lack of medical facilities and personnel from the primary health level to the tertiary sector in the public health system," the party maintained.

The economy, which had considerably slowed down before the pandemic struck, has now gone into a tailspin ever since the lockdown was imposed. Experts are predicting the GDP will contract from 5 to 10 per cent for 2020-21. The effect of the deep recession has been large-scale loss of jobs, shutting down of small businesses and substantial parts of the services sector, the party said.

The only way out of this was for the government to step up public expenditure and investment in a big way.

Modi's speech from the Red Fort gave no such signal, the party said.

## HC grants bail to Wadhawan brothers in Yes Bank fraud case

PTI  
MUMBAI, 20 AUGUST

Bombay HC on Thursday granted bail to DHFL promoters Kapil Wadhawan and Dheeraj Wadhawan, accused of money laundering by the ED

case, saying mandatory default bail is the sequel to non-filing of charge sheet within the stipulated 60-day period.

The brothers, however, will remain in jail as they have also been booked by the CBI in the same case.

in the multi-crore Yes Bank fraud

## India asks China to expeditiously complete disengagement at Ladakh

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 20 AUGUST

the LAC in the Western Sector," it added.

In this context, the two sides agreed to resolve the outstanding issues in an expeditious manner and in accordance with the existing agreements and protocols.

The two sides were in agreement that the restoration of peace and tranquility in the border areas would be essential for the overall development of bilateral relations.

The two sides acknowledged the need to maintain close communication through both the diplomatic and military channels so as to ensure complete disengagement. In this regard, they agreed to continue their ongoing engagements, including through the meetings of the WMCC.

This was the fifth meeting of the WMCC since the stand-off between the troops of the two countries in early May.

The meeting took place against the backdrop of the refusal by the Chinese troops to retreat from friction points at Pangong Tso, clearly suggesting that the border stand-off could last months.

## Bengal has over 2,300 containment zones

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, 20 AUGUST

West Bengal has over 2300 containment zones with Kolkata witnessing 20 zones, which is the lowest number of such zones in the last two months even as the city continued to register the highest number of cases.

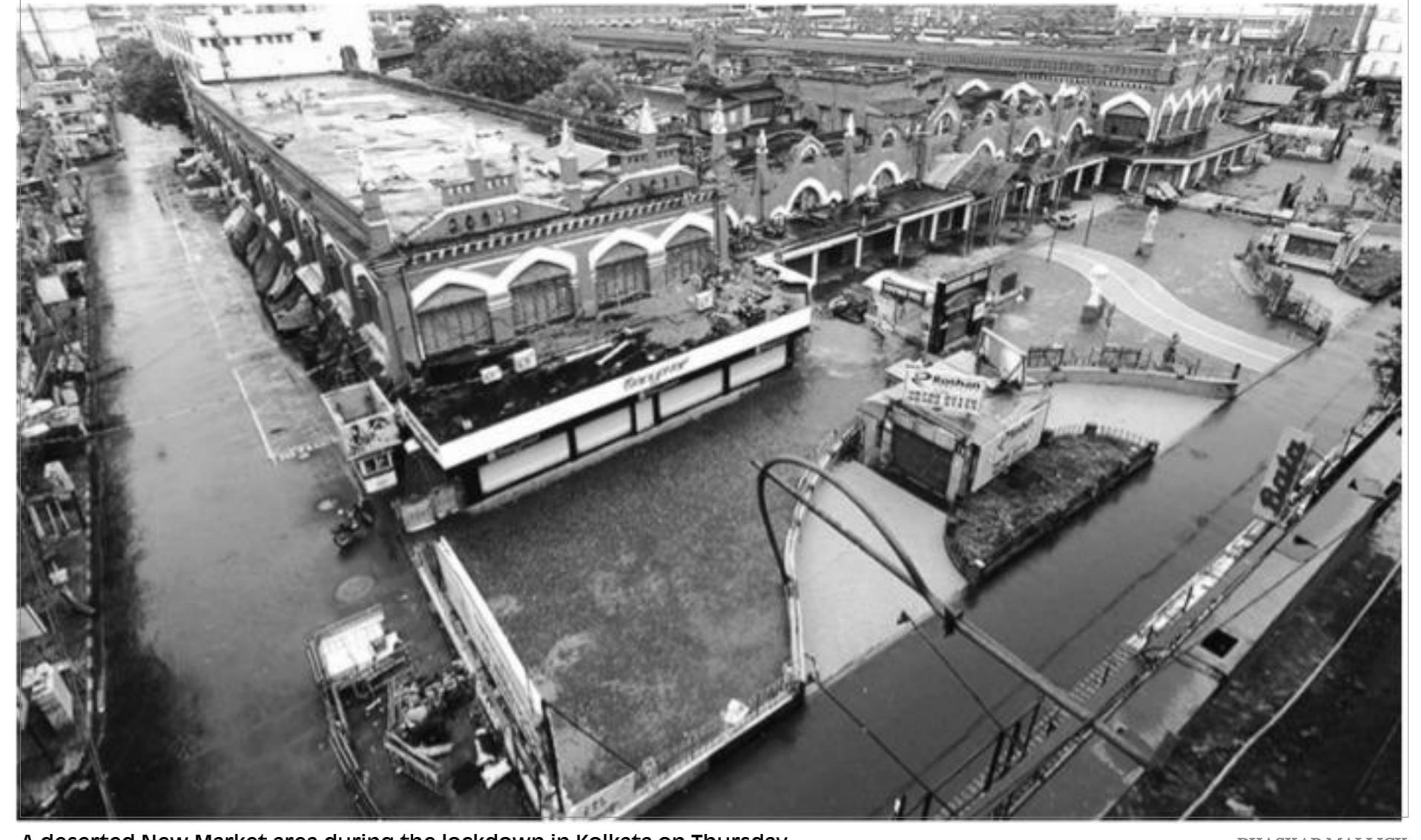
Compared to last week, five new containment zones have been added in the city while 14 were dropped but the chief cause of worry lies in the fact that three slums have been included in the list. This is for the first time that so many slums have been demarcated as containment zones. Two of the slums are in Beliaghata and one in Chetla.

The highest number of containment zones are in Nadia followed by East Burdwan and North Dinajpur, as per the state government's website 'Egyi Bangla'.

According to the list that was uploaded this evening the total number of containment zones in West Bengal is 2304, of which Nadia has 396 such zones while East Burdwan has 350 containment areas.

In North Dinajpur there are 334 zones, Coochbehar has 212, while in West Midnapore 188, Birbhum 127 and Purulia 123 containment zones, the website stated.

The neighbouring districts, which recorded a maximum number of new cases, namely North 24 Parganas has 92 broad-



A deserted New Market area during the lockdown in Kolkata on Thursday.

BHASKAR MALLICK

based containment zones, Howrah 90, South 24 Parganas 56 and Hooghly 42, it said.

Meanwhile, the first day of the two-day lockdown was enforced today in the city with stringent measures by the Kolkata Police. There were more security checkpoints while every vehicle that was on the road, without a valid reason, was stopped for checking and subsequently the pas-

sengers were questioned.

A traffic constable said he had strict instructions to stop vehicles at checkpoints. He said only the vehicles engaged in essential services are allowed to ply but many were taking advantage of this and have ventured out on flimsy grounds.

The drivers who violated lockdown norms though were allowed to go after inquiry but they will be subjected to penal-

ties, said the traffic sergeant. Additionally, drones were deployed for surveillance.

However, the lockdown has paved the way for another menace. With near-empty roads, several drivers were detained for over-speeding. Several vehicles were detained for the same. Main intersections such as Hazra, Park Circus, Exide crossing etc. were a deserted look.

Medical shops, milk booths and petrol pumps, however, were kept out of the purview of the lockdown.

Flight services out of the Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International airport here remained suspended, while long-distance trains were rescheduled at Howrah and Sealdah terminals. Ferry services through inland waterways also remained suspended.

## Hope there will be no cover-up in alleged irregularities in purchase of Covid care material: Dhankhar

SNS&PTI  
KOLKATA, 20 AUGUST

West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar on Thursday expressed hope that a three-member panel formed by the Mamata Banerjee government to look into alleged irregularities in purchase of Covid care material will name the beneficiaries and that there will be no cover-up.

Dhankhar claimed that he had "flagged earliest irregularities in purchases" meant to upgrade the state's health infrastructure amid the pandemic.

"Indicated-scam was in making as usual 'HOT FAVORITE MAN FRIDAY' was beneficiary," he said in a message posted in a social media platform.

and no cover-up, "Dhankhar, who has had a slew of confrontations with the Trinamool Congress government in the state on several issues since he took over as governor a little over a year back, said.

On receiving complaints from different quarters, the chief minister, who also holds the Health portfolio, formed the three-member panel to probe allegations of irregularities in purchases after the Finance department relaxed norms of tender process amid the Covid-

## No proof of Covid relapse: Experts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
PUNE, 20 AUGUST

Doctors and clinical investigators involved in treating coronavirus infection have claimed there was no evidence of the disease recurring in people who have recovered.

However, Dr Giridhar Babu, part of the ICMR's research task force on Epidemiology and Surveillance, said it is difficult to say confidently whether or not there is a relapse in recovered patients as some signs post-recovery can be confused with Covid symptoms.

One has to establish that the coronavirus has caused new infection in a recovered patient, he said.

"We are up against evidence from all over the world where we are seeing there is no re-infection so when we say that is happening only in India then it maybe something new," Babu said.

Dr Swapnil Kulkarni, a chest specialist at the pulmonology department of Mumbai-based KEM Hospital, said there is no definitive evidence of re-infection in recovered patients.

"There were reports from

China earlier this year about recurrence of the infection, but no further information was received on that and other than that there were no reports of relapse," said Kulkarni, treating Covid-19 patients in Pune.

There have been cases wherein results of RT-PCR test have come out positive for patients who have recovered as this test detects remnants of the dead virus in the body, Kulkarni said.

Dead articles or remnants of the virus are harmless and take one or two months to get cleared from the body, Kulkarni said, adding that there is no clarity on whether these tests come out positive because of re-infection or due to presence of old remnants.

Also, the percentage of false negatives and positives is quite high in RT-PCR tests, Kulkarni said.

"Several recovered patients come for follow-up, but we have not come across any case of recurrence with proper symptoms," Kulkarni said.

Dr Sudhir Patuts, medical superintendent, Naidu Hospital, also denied any reports of recurrence of the infection.

### PUBLIC NOTICE

The General Public is hereby informed that M/s Puri Construction Pvt. Ltd. (Developer) has been granted Licence No. 58 of 2017 dated 27.07.2017 by the Director, Town & Country Planning, Haryana, Chandigarh to develop a Group Housing colony on the land admeasuring 10 Acres in village Ullawas, Sector-61, District Gurugram.

Whereas the General Public is further informed that Environment Clearance for the said project has been granted by the State Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA), Haryana vide their letter No. SEIAA/HR/2019/268, dated 30.08.2019.

And, whereas, vide this Public Notice, it is intimated to all concerned that a copy of the said Environment Clearance letter is available with the office of the Haryana State Pollution Control Board, Panchkula and the office of SEIAA, Haryana, Bay No. 55-58, Praytan Bhawan, Sector-2, Panchkula.

Place : Gurugram  
Date : 21-08-2020

For Puri Construction Pvt. Ltd.

### PUBLIC NOTICE

## Dictator cornered?

Pressure is mounting on Belarus' dictator-President, Alexander Lukashenko, to renegotiate the terms of engagement with his country's citizens after unprecedented unrest, extending now to workers of state-controlled factories, has refused to die down in the wake of an election that many, if not most, voters believe was rigged. Mr Lukashenko has reacted with characteristic intolerance, his security forces having locked up more than 7,000 protesters and injured hundreds of others with rubber bullets, stun grenades and clubs. Despite the extreme aggression of state forces, the protests have been unrelenting and put the Presidency under a cloud. With the European Union, which had greeted the poll outcome with extreme scepticism, now having weighed in against him, Mr Lukashenko might find himself cornered, notwithstanding the support of Russian President Vladimir Putin who is no stranger to allegations of poll-rigging. If the EU follows up on its threat to sanction Belarusian officials involved in the brutal crackdown, it might force Mr Lukashenko to retrace at least a few steps for it is well known that the oligarchs of the former Soviet Union, including Russia, seek Western European destinations for the wealth they acquire. Throughout, Mr Lukashenko's conduct has been characteristic of dictators who feel threatened by challenges to their power. Long before the election, he locked up his main rival, Sjarhei Tsikhanouski, a blogger and entrepreneur. This provoked other Opposition candidates to rally behind Tsikhanouski's wife, Svetlana Tshikanouskaya, who received huge popular response. While participation at her rallies and widespread expressions of support of people suggested Mr Lukashenko had a tight contest on his hands, the President was dismissive. The Opposition campaign faced many official roadblocks, but most Belarusians were convinced that the result announced by the state ~ suggesting Mr Lukashenko had won 80 per cent of the vote ~ had been heavily rigged. Mr Lukashenko's heavy-handedness did not end there. Shortly after this "victory", Mrs Tshikanouskaya was shown on state-run television appealing to the country to accept the verdict, a statement that many people believe was extracted under duress. Shortly after, she was permitted to leave for neighbouring Lithuania where on August 14, she published a video claiming she had won the election and sought a mechanism to transfer power from Mr Lukashenko. While Mr Lukashenko is unlikely to give up power, the reaction of Europe, mortified by a naked assault on democratic values in its backyard, is likely to play a part in what happens next. While Belarus' trade relations with the EU are not significant, an independent poll conducted a decade ago had suggested many of its citizens would prefer closer cooperation, including membership of the EU if offered. But more than these regional compulsions, it is the popular uprising against the regime that may well determine the course of events. If Mr Lukashenko cracks down harshly, he will have to contend with international opprobrium. If he does not, and protests intensify, he might find his position getting untenable.

## Salvation or doom?

The controversy provoked by remarks made last year by Ms Priyanka Gandhi on a person from outside her family leading the Congress, and now published in a recent book, suggest just how India's main political parties view the proposition. While the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party's enthusiastic response to the remark confirms its obsession with the Gandhi family, the apparent disavowal of the remark by the Congress on the ground it was made a year ago and does not have current relevance suggests the party is not yet ready to give up its obeisance to the Gandhis. Certainly, the party spokesperson was quite vocal in saying that Congress members wanted Mr Rahul Gandhi to return to the helm. Yet, a careful reading of the interview in question would show that even the remark made by the younger Ms Gandhi was tinged with condescension. Asked if the presence of the Gandhis in the party would come in the way of a non-family head, she said, "I think it would only undermine somebody if that was the way we wanted (it) to be." In other words, the suggestion was that a party president from outside the family would be there on sufferance, and this assertion should silence those who believe a democratisation of inner-party affairs is now imminent. In the years between 2004 and 2014, Mrs Sonia Gandhi had perfected the art of wielding power without responsibility when the party controlled the Union Government. Of course, the party projects this differently and its spokesperson made the position quite clear when asked to comment on the interview in focus. He is reported to have said: "The Nehru-Gandhi family has held together and served Congress unmindful of the trappings of power. In 2004, Soniaji set an example by sacrificing power to serve the party." This would suggest that the same prescription would be used to control the party, even in the unlikely situation of the Gandhis giving up official roles within its structure. The problem with the Congress of course is that while it has several leaders of talent and accomplishment, not one of them is acceptable to more than a small faction, or outside a specific area or state. Unlike in the past, when it drew talented individuals who were acceptable nationally, it has after the 1969 split degenerated gradually into an entity that needs a glue to hold it together. While electoral reverses in 1977 and at various points of time between 1989 and 2004 caused some leaders to break away and form their own outfits, these have remained essentially local or at best regional in scope and outlook. Until the Congress finds within its ranks a leader with greater acceptability, it is stuck with the Gandhis. That may be its salvation, if discontent with the present dispensation grows, or its doom, if the BJP triumphs in another national election.

# Kashmir 2020 ~ II

For a long-term settlement of the multi-dimensional Kashmir conflict what is required is restoration of normalcy and resumption of the political process through reduction in the trust-deficit, without which no significant economic development will be possible. Release of political leaders and dialogue with all stakeholders with the intention of ameliorating their genuine grievances are necessary steps towards that end



In the aftermath of the lockdown of Kashmir from 5 August 2019, there had been no marked improvement in the security situation, despite New Delhi's claims to the contrary. After Imran Khan raised the Kashmir issue in the UN General Assembly in September 2019, the bottled-up emotions of Kashmiris erupted, and protests broke out across Kashmir. Nor has there been any let up in violence. As a reporter from the India Today TV reported on 10 October last, internal documents of security forces contradict the claim that the situation was normal; and that since 5 August 2019, 10 militants were killed in encounters and there were over 300 stone-pelting cases in which close to 100 security personnel were injured.

According to data provided by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), in reply to an application for information made under the RTI Act, Jammu and Kashmir had the highest number of stone-pelting incidents in 2019 ~ 1996 to be precise, during January-November 2019 ~ and in August there were 658 such incidents. Militants hit the streets despite tight security; and between 14 October and 10 November, at least four local militants who joined the LeT, were killed. What was more worrying, they were now targeting migrant labourers in a bid to cripple the economy; and in October 2019, at least seven migrant workers were killed, including five from West Bengal.

During the first six months of 2020, at least 60 terrorists/militants have been killed, with 20 being killed in April alone. In July, several terrorists belonging to the JeM and LeT were killed. What is more, during June and July, an unending cycle of killing of grassroots political activists belonging to the BJP and other political parties has created a sense of fear, belying the claim that the situation in Kashmir was 'under con-

trol'. In the current year, till 3 May, 35 local youth had joined various terrorist outfits. So, what improvements have taken place in the security situation in J&K? Nor has there been any respite in cease-fire violations by Pakistan across the LoC. According to MHA data, 3,086 ceasefire violations took place in 2019, with the highest number recorded in October; and in 2020, there had been 1547 ceasefire violations till 3 May.

From the beginning of October 2019, attempts were made by the government to bring back a semblance of normality to the State, with the re-opening of schools and colleges, withdrawal of restrictions on movement of people and private vehicles, opening of markets and partial restoration of telephone connections. Peoples' reaction was, however, lukewarm and their protests against New Delhi's actions somewhat 'morphed' into a civil disobedience movement. In elections for posts of chairpersons of Block Development Councils held in October 2019, Independents won in 17 BDCs, compared to BJP candidates' win in 81. In the Kashmir division, independents were elected in 109 Blocks and the BJP candidates were elected in 18. The election results are significant because except the BJP, none of the mainstream political parties - the NC, the PDP, the Congress or the CPI-M ~ had taken part.

The revocation of Article 370 does not seem to have made the people of Jammu and Kashmir happy ~ not even the Pandits who live in Kashmir ~ except for the Gujjars, some of the worst sufferers of the earlier regime,

and the Ladakhis. Even in the new UT of Ladakh, Muslims in the Kargil Division are not happy. Ladakhis, while welcoming the creation of the new UT of Ladakh, feel apprehensive about the future. On the other hand, the people of Jammu, including BJP supporters, were sulking over the downgrading of the state, while the abolition of the 'permanent resident' status created a fear of outsiders flooding the region, competing for jobs and of a growing land mafia grabbing prized lands.

Therefore, a demand for a special domicile law has come up, with the J&K Panthers Party being most vocal about it. Some others want that the Himachal Pradesh model be invoked for job security and protecting local culture.

The revocation of Article 370 and the lockdown has hit the economy hard, especially tourism and the apple trade. The economy has suffered a loss of Rs 40,000 crore since the abrogation of Article 370. So far as rejuvenation is concerned, there has not been any rush of investors,

nor is there likely to be as long as militancy persists. Moreover, the topography of the state is hardly conducive to the development of heavy industry.

The arrest/detention of mainstream political party leaders created a large political void which cannot be filled by the Panchayats and Sarpanches on whom the government had pinned its faith; rather it gave a field day to militants/extremists.

The decision-makers in New Delhi tried to showcase their 'achievements' by a guided tour of Jammu and Kashmir by European

Members of Parliament ~ in their private capacity, as the EU Embassy in Delhi made clear ~ while denying Indian Members of Parliament the right to visit J&K.

National 'integration' is possible through emotional integration, not by suppression of dissent and denying people their legitimate rights. For a long-term settlement of the multi-dimensional Kashmir conflict what is required is restoration of normalcy and resumption of the political process through reduction in the trust-deficit, without which no significant economic development will be possible. Release of political leaders and dialogue with all stakeholders with the intention of ameliorating their genuine grievances are necessary steps towards that end. According to a senior official, of the more than 6600 people arrested/detained after abrogation of Article 370, nearly 90 per cent have now been released, including the top leadership of the NC, Shah Faesal and the Peoples' Conference chief, Sajad Lone, although former PDP Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti remains under detention. Whether they will be allowed to resume political activities remains to be seen.

Improvement in bilateral relations with Pakistan will also be necessary for the settlement of the Kashmir dispute, which may seem impossible given Pakistan's hostile activities in the recent past. Perhaps the time is not ripe as yet. But the policy option should not be ruled out as Pakistanis have now realised that bellicosity towards India has not brought them much benefit, in terms of gaining international support.

Even states that have supported India's contention that revocation of Article 370 is a matter of India's domestic policy have urged both India and Pakistan to settle their disputes through bilateral negotiations, as this will reduce regional tensions.

(Concluded)



ARUN KUMAR BANERJI

The writer is Professor (Retd.) of International Relations and Dean, Faculty of Arts, Jadavpur University



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

## Kerala's humane and selfless citizens

SIR, Be it a bridge collapse, a building fire, a major road/rail accident or a fatal bomb blast, people flock to the spot in droves clicking pictures or selfies to announce "I was there" and post it on social media to count the number of "likes". This "modern fashion" of dark/black/grief voyeurism is not only vulgar, it poses a great hindrance to relief efforts also.

If rest of India learns from these bravehearts about love, selflessness, compassion and humanity, perhaps a new dawn of civility and kindness would at last arrive in this society plagued by hatred, inhumanity and intolerance.

Yours, etc., Kajal Chatterjee,  
Sodepur 11 August.

### SC DISAPPOINTS

SIR, This refers to the editorial, "Dignity restored?" (18 August). By holding senior lawyer and activist Prashant Bhushan guilty of crimi-

nal contempt of court for his tweets, the Supreme Court appears to have restricted space for even genuine criticism of the judiciary. This impression is further strengthened by the bench's assertion to favour an 'iron hand' in such matters. While it is found that most liberal democracies have decriminalised the 'scandalizing' of courts with a holistic ideal that such criticisms are necessary to make judicial systems stronger and foolproof, it is disappointing that India's apex court has taken a different stand.

It should not be forgotten that for the first time in the history of free India, four senior-most judges of the Supreme Court themselves

### LOSING FACE

SIR, Being social networking giants, Facebook and Facebook-owned WhatsApp can't deny their role in creating an even playing field across the spectrum. Be it political, social or ideological standpoints, they cannot be selective and biased any way. Instead, Facebook should uphold its ethos of integrity and neutrality. As per a recent report in *The World Street Journal*, Facebook has remained silent and inactive on the hate and communal postings of at least four individuals or their linked groups having a connection with the present dispensation in India. They have not been warned, reprimanded or blocked from the platform or considered for any legal action. This is unwarranted.

The social media giant has forsaken responsibility and transparency. Facebook had already shown its guts and decisiveness while discarding 700 pages from its repository on the eve of the 2019 general election in India. In US also, it has shown exemplary grit and stamina to take action against white supremacist and militant black organisations. This time around, too, we expect Facebook to rise to the occasion.

Yours, etc., Chanchal Nandy, Durgapur, 18 August.



A MEMBER OF THE **ANN**  
ASIAN VOICES

## Race for a vaccine is not one of speed

An enormous amount of international prestige, to say nothing of profit, awaits the country that first develops a Covid-19 vaccine. This is natural. Earlier this week, President Vladimir Putin said that Russia had become the first country in the world to grant regulatory approval to a vaccine against the disease. This is news that attests to the scientific and technological prowess of a talented people who have registered achievements and made history in a wide variety of fields over decades ~ from transformers and synthetic rubber to helicopters and the launch of Sputnik 1, the world's first artificial satellite. Appropriately, the vaccine will be named Sputnik V. It would be good, indeed, if a successful vaccine were to benefit humanity in the same way that the satellite expanded the horizons of space exploration and research for all. But while speed is important in discovering a vaccine for a disease that has ravaged lives and economies globally, what is essential is that the drug should be effective, tested and safe.

Concerns have emerged over the fact that Moscow's announcement, which paves the way for the mass inoculation of the Russian population, comes after less than two months of human testing. Human trials are critical in ascertaining the reliability of a vaccine.

This principle applies to all countries and companies in the race to produce a viable drug. Popular acceptance of vaccination itself would be severely undermined should an antidote go wrong by proving to be ineffective or, worse, unsafe. Hence the need for caution.

Experts, cited in a vaccine-tracker survey earlier this month, estimate that even a fast-tracked process could propel a victorious candidate to the market in about 12 to 18 months and that, too, is only if the process pro-

ceeds seamlessly from scientific conception to market availability. Such a timeframe, and its attendant caveats, suggests just how difficult it is to invent a vaccine, test it, pass regulatory scrutiny and ultimately produce a drug for the mass market. Thus, the World Health Organisation disclaims approval or endorsement of any product or entity mentioned in its "draft landscape" of Covid-19 candidate vaccines. The world body needs to stick to cautionary scientific evidence closely in a race in which the quest for fame and profit plays such an important part.

Competition is not bad in itself. Singapore, too, is making progress on this front. The first cohort of volunteers has been dosed with a vaccine developed jointly by Duke-NUS Medical School and United States pharmaceutical company Arcturus Therapeutics. Singaporeans await further news eagerly.

Meanwhile, expectations of a medical prevention should not dilute social habits that citizens have developed since the disease cut a dreadful epidemiological and economic swathe through lives here. Safe distancing and other precautions must continue to guide behaviour.

came out publicly against the then Chief Justice of India in January 2018. The power of contempt is not meant to protect judges or the judiciary from criticism in a democracy, where every individual and institution vested with public function can be subjected to scrutiny.

It appears that the hope and trust of the common man stands shaken with this verdict. It's time to have a relook at the definition of "criminal contempt" to make it compatible with democratic norms.

Yours, etc., S S Paul, Nadia, 18 August.

### CURBING FREEDOM

SIR, The news report, 'Bengal Islam Association warns Muslims against ties with BJP & RSS' (The

Statesman, August 17), is provocative. Apart from trying to stop the community members from joining the said party, the communiqué borders on threatening their family members as well. It says that even family members of the defaulters will not be spared in coming days.

There is no need to mix up religion with politics. Such a threat amounts to severe curtailment of the freedom of choice, as guaranteed in our Constitution. Saner sense should prevail in the minds of the office bearers of the Association. They should, in fact, be more concerned with improvement in the living standards of community members, rather than bicker over joining a particular political party.

Yours, etc., Ashok Kumar Ghosh, Kolkata, 17 August.





Urge software community to leverage existing policies and ecosystem to make India big hub of software products

RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD  
UNION MINISTER**business**

## THUMBNAILS

**Gold, silver prices fall:** Gold prices plunged by Rs 1,492 to Rs 52,819 per 10 grams on Thursday in the national capital in line with fall in international prices of the precious metal, according to HDFC Securities. The precious yellow metal had closed at Rs 54,311 per 10 grams in the previous trade. Silver also witnessed weak trend as it tanked Rs 1,476 to Rs 67,924 per kg, from Rs 69,400 per kg in the previous day.

**Retail inflation:** Retail inflation for farm and rural workers eased to 6.58 per cent and 6.53 per cent, respectively, in July this year on account of lower prices of certain food items, the labour ministry said on Thursday. Inflation based on CPI-AL (Consumer Price Index-Agricultural Labourers) and CPI-RL (Consumer Price Index-Rural Labourers) stood at 7.16 per cent and 7 per cent, respectively in June.

**Tractor-trailer:** Volvo Trucks on Thursday announced the introduction of its tractor-trailer combination, specially curated for express cargo movement in India in partnership with logistics player Delhivery. Volvo and Delhivery have tested together to deploy Volvo FM 4x2 tractor-trailer long haul truck for express operations, allowing speedy delivery and cost efficiencies of services, the company said in a statement.

**'The Better Home':** The Better Home, a Bengaluru-based startup, launched a recycling programme for all of its packaging material enabling consumers to send all used packaging back to the company for recycling. "We have enabled about 7,000 homes to switch to eco-friendly alternatives in the past 4 months of operations. It helped us save more than 45 million litres of contaminated water from entering our oceans," said The Better Home founder & CEO Dhruv Parekh.

# Govt plans further stake sale in IRCTC through OFS

Bids invited from merchant bankers by 10 Sept for managing sale process

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 20 AUGUST

The government is planning to sell part of its stake in Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corp (IRCTC) in the current fiscal, and has invited bids from merchant bankers for managing the sale process.

"The GoI intends to disinvest a part of the paid-up equity capital of IRCTC out of its shareholding through 'offer for sale' (OFS) method of shares by promoters through the stock exchanges" as per Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) Rules and Regulations," Dipam said while inviting request for proposal (RFP).

The merchant bankers will have to submit their bids by 10 September.

The government currently holds 87.40 per cent stake in IRCTC. To meet Sebi's public holding norm, the government has to lower its stake in the company to 75 per cent.

Shares of IRCTC closed at Rs 1,346.65 apiece on the

## MOVE TO MEET SEBI NORM

► The government currently holds 87.40 per cent stake in IRCTC. To meet Sebi's public holding norm, the government has to lower its stake in the company to 75 per cent.  
► IRCTC was listed on the stock exchanges in October 2019. The company had raised Rs 645 crore through the initial public offer.

► IRCTC OFS will help the government inch forward in meeting the Rs 2.10 lakh crore disinvestment target set for the current financial year.

BSE, down 1.20 per cent over its previous close.

IRCTC, the only entity authorised by Indian Railways to provide catering services to railways, online railway tickets and packaged drinking water at railway stations and trains in India, was listed on the stock exchanges in October 2019. The company had raised Rs 645 crore through the initial public offer.

IRCTC OFS will help the government inch forward in meeting the Rs 2.10 lakh crore disinvestment target set for the



current financial year. Of this, Rs 1.20 lakh crore will come from disinvestment of public sector undertakings and another Rs 90,000 crore from stake sale in financial institutions.

So far in the current fiscal, the department of investment and public asset management (Dipam) has not been able to sell stake in any CPSE as the coronavirus outbreak has impacted equity markets. However, through Bharat Bond ETF-II, the government has garnered sub-

scription worth Rs 11,000 crore for "AAA" rated bonds of CPSEs.

Dipam secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey had last month said restrictions on international travel due to Covid-19 pandemic have put brakes on strategic disinvestment of CPSEs, like Air India and BPLC, but completing the transactions remains a priority of the government.

Dipam, which manages the CPSE stake sale process, has also set into motion the process of listing of the country's largest insurer Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) and appointed pre-IPO transaction advisor. The government is looking at listing the insurer on domestic bourses in the January-March quarter of the current fiscal.

The government is also looking at launching initial public offering (IPO) of Indian Railway Finance Corp Ltd (IRFC) and had in January filed draft red herring prospectus (DRHP) with the Securities and Exchange Board of India for IPO of over 140 crore equity shares.

# Tata Steel targets increasing capacity to 25 MTPA by 2025

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, 20 AUGUST

Tata Steel is targeting to increase its crude steel production capacity in the country to 25 million tons per annum (MTPA) by 2025 from 20 MTPA at present.

"The company is focused on increasing its India capacity by growing organically and inorganically. The idea in the long term is to maintain leadership position in existing market segments and attain leadership position in new market segments," said a statement issued by Tata Steel here today.

At Jamshedpur, the mother plant, along with subsidiary company Tata Steel Long Products Ltd, has a combined installed capacity of 12 MTPA. The acquisi-

tion of erstwhile Bhushan Steel at Dhenkanal in Odisha - now rechristened Tata Steel BSL - has added another 5.6 MTPA to the group's installed capacity in India, the company said. The domestic steel major said the capacity of Tata Steel Kalinganagar, currently at 3 MTPA, is set to go up to 8 MTPA.

Tata Steel is also looking at growing its long products portfolio. Besides augmenting its long products capacity at Jamshedpur from the existing 3 MTPA, there is scope for catering to higher-end long products that are required in smaller quantities, it said.

"Today, as our vibrant nation takes confident strides towards economic self-reliance, we remain committed to move forward on our

intertwined growth journey. Our desire to imagine, innovate and co-create a future with infinite possibilities is reflected in our efforts to look beyond steel, adopt next-generation technologies and make a meaningful positive impact on over a billion lives," a Tata Steel official said.

The company is leveraging its technology leadership, innovation capabilities and sustainability focus to create long-term value for its stakeholders. The idea is also to transition to lower carbon-intensive operations.

The company's foray into the steel recycling business is primarily aimed at promoting sustainable steel making and creating a circular economy for steel, according to the statement.

# Trai seeks public views on broadband speed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 20 AUGUST

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India today invited public views to define broadband speed in various categories for both mobile as well as fixedline services, and sought suggestions on ways to increase the speed in order to meet the objective of the existing policy.

A consultation paper by the regulator in this regard today follows a request from the department of telecommunications in the matter. It aims to promote broadband connectivity in the country and figure out measures to be taken to enhance the broadband speed as envisaged in the National Digital Communications Policy (NDCP) 2018.

"In essence, it appears that DoT is seeking the authority's

recommendations on - defining fixed and mobile broadband, innovative approaches for infrastructure creation, promoting broadband connectivity, and measures to be taken for enhancing broadband speed," Trai said in its consultation paper.

The Trai has fixed 21 September as the last date for the comments and 5 October for counter-comments.

In another development, the Trai today floated a discussion paper on enabling unbundling of specific layers of telecom-like infrastructure, network, services, through differential licensing.

The Trai has sought industry's views on whether network services layer and service delivery layer need to be separated, by introducing specific licence for network element alone.

# IOB reports ₹121 cr profit in June quarter

NEW DELHI, 20 AUGUST

Indian Overseas Bank today posted a net profit of Rs 121 crore for the quarter ended 30 June 2020, mainly due to fall in bad loans.

The lender posted a net loss of Rs 342.08 crore for the same quarter a year ago. In March quarter, the bank had a profit of Rs 144 crore, Indian Overseas Bank said in a regulatory filing.

Total income of the bank during April-June period of fiscal 2020-21 rose to Rs 5,233.63 crore from Rs 5,006.48 crore in the same period of the previous fiscal, mainly due to increase in treasury income, it said.

Interest income stood at Rs 4,302 crore for the quarter against Rs 4,336.39 crore a year ago mainly due to decrease in MCLR, it added.

# Chemist body writes to Amazon CEO, says e-pharmacies 'illegal'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 20 AUGUST

The top body of chemists and druggists has shot off a letter to Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos on the world's largest online retailer entering the online pharmacy space in India, saying e-pharmacies are "illegal" and not allowed under the country's laws.

The All India Organisation of Chemists and Druggists (AIOC), which claims to represent 8.5 lakh chemists, on 14 August wrote to Bezos and his India CEO Amit Agarwal, saying the online pharmacy space "has been marred by extreme controversies, court cases, and legal issues in last few years."

"We are writing to you as we came to know that www.amazon.in has decided to enter "online phar-

macy" space, probably oblivious to the fact that e-pharmacies are illegal and not recognised by the laws under Drug and Cosmetic Act & Rules thereunder," it wrote.

Earlier this month, Amazon launched an online pharmacy in Bengaluru. Amazon Pharmacy has started accepting orders for both over-the-counter and prescription-based medicines and is also selling traditional herbal medicines and some health devices such as glucose meters, nebulisers and hand-held massagers.

The association said the rules say that "prescription for certain drugs needs to be endorsed while sale."

Also, the dispensation has to take place from a licensed premise for which the licence has been issued by the competent authori-

ty, it said.

"Therefore, the sale of prescription drugs and medicines through online mediums is illegal. The legal regime does not permit home delivery of medicines, though owing to situation of Covid-19 pandemic and an emergency-like situation, the government allowed the home delivery of medicines but it was meant for only neighbourhood pharmacies," it said. Home delivery of medicines, the association said, would "require extensive modification of Drug and Cosmetic Act."

Copies of the letter have also been marked to Prime Minister Narendra Modi as well as some key ministers and government officials.

Amazon did not respond to an e-mailed query regarding the letter.

# Simplilearn's post-graduate course in cyber security

MUMBAI, 20 AUGUST

The US and India-based digital learning platform Simplilearn has announced a new "Post Graduate Program in Cyber Security", to feed an Internet security business increasing in necessity as e-commerce and online crimes exponentially rise.

With modules from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Schwarzman College of Computing and EC Council, this comprehensive six-month programme will provide industry-relevant skills to meet the growing demand for jobs in cyber security, according to Simplilearn.

"With rapid digitisation comes an increase in volume of data being generated, along with the risk of cyber attacks," said Anand Narayanan, chief product officer, Simplilearn.

"Industry reports from recent times have recorded more than four lakh Coronavirus related cyber attacks and the numbers are growing," he said. Cyber security is expected to be a lucrative business sector this decade. An increasingly digital world is investing more in online security. The vulnerability was exposed in July when three teenagers were caught in the US stealing \$40,000 after hacking into some of the world's most high-profile and supposedly secure Twitter accounts.

Simplilearn's post-graduate Internet security course - offering 150 hours of online classes and interactive labs - is for professionals with a technology background and five years of work experience and graduates aiming for a career in e-commerce.

The Hamburg-based Statista has estimated e-commerce worth to reach \$6.54 trillion in 2022.

# Equity benchmarks tumble amid global selloff

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI, 20 AUGUST

er NSE Nifty slumped 96.20 points or 0.84 per cent to finish at 11,312.20 points.

HDFC was the top laggard in the Sensex pack, shedding 2.35 per cent, followed by Axis Bank, Bharti Airtel, Mahindra & Mahindra, Titan, Reliance Industries, ICICI Bank and IndusInd Bank.

Only five index constituents finished with gains - NTPC, ONGC, PowerGrid, Tata Steel and HCL Tech, spurring as much as 6.87 per cent.

Global markets reeled after US Federal Reserve's minutes of its July meeting underscored the dangers of the Covid-19 pandemic to the American economy.

Federal Open Market Committee members said the pandemic poses "considerable

## SENSEX PLUNGES 394 POINTS

► The BSE Sensex stayed in the negative territory throughout the session before closing at 38,220.39 points, down

394.40 points or 1.02 per cent.

► On similar lines, the broader NSE Nifty slumped 96.20 points or 0.84 per cent to finish at 11,312.20 points.

► Global markets reeled after US Federal Reserve's minutes of its July meeting underscored the dangers of the Covid-19 pandemic to the American economy.

risks" to the economic outlook as well as the financial system.

The Fed Reserve cast doubts on the nascent recov-

ery of the labour market seen in the previous months and its sustainability. Markets, globally, were banking on

expectations of steady recovery in the major economies and the consequent return to normalcy for businesses. Although there was nothing new in the minutes, markets reacted negatively to it.

"Most sectoral indices were in the red, with the banking index leading the losses. Investors are advised to remain cautious and another round of losses, similar to today, can bring in negativity into the markets," said Vinod Nair, head of research at Geojit Financial Services.

BSE telecom, bankex, finance, energy, teck, FMCG and auto indices fell up to 1.78 per cent, while utilities, power and metal indices rallied as much as 4.19 per cent.

Broader BSE mid-cap and

small-cap indices outperformed the benchmarks, surging up to 0.87 per cent.

Bourses in Shanghai, Hong Kong, Tokyo and Seoul ended with heavy losses.

Stock exchanges in Europe also witnessed robust selling in early sessions.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude was trading 1.06 per cent lower at \$44.89 per barrel.

In the forex market, the rupee plunged 20 paise and settled below the 75 per US dollar mark today as strengthening American currency and losses in domestic equities weighed on investor sentiment.

Forex traders said strong dollar, weak domestic equities and US Federal Reserve meeting minutes weighed on

investor sentiment.

At the interbank forex market, the local unit settled for the day at 75.02 against the US dollar, down 20 paise over its previous close of 74.82.

During the session, the domestic unit witnessed an intra-day high of 74.93 and a low of 75.05 against the US dollar.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, rose 0.31 per cent to 93.17.

"The US dollar has strengthened overnight after the release of US Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) minutes that were less dovish than expected," said Abhishek Goenka, founder and CEO, IFA Global.



Russia has a long history of developing and administering vaccines, including those for yellow fever and polio.

SAYING WHO WELCOMED ALL ADVANCES IN VACCINE DEVELOPMENT

The Statesman  
NEW DELHI, FRIDAY 21 AUGUST 2020

09

# Russia's Navalny in coma after alleged poisoning

Last year, the Opp leader was rushed to hospital following suspected poisoning

ASSOCIATED PRESS

MOSCOW, 20 AUGUST

Russian opposition politician Alexei Navalny is in a coma and on a ventilator in a hospital intensive care unit after falling ill from suspected poisoning that his allies believe is linked to his political activity.

The 44-year-old foe of Russia's President Vladimir Putin fell unwell on a flight back to Moscow from Tomsk, a city in Siberia, and was taken to a hospital after the plane made an emergency landing in Omsk, Navalny's spokeswoman Kira Yarmysh said on Twitter.

She told the Echo Moskovsky radio station he must have consumed something from tea he drank at an airport cafe before boarding the plane early Thursday.

During the flight, Navalny started sweating and asked her to talk to him so that he could focus on a sound of a voice." He then went to the bathroom and lost consciousness.

Looks like Putin is doing really badly as he handed some data on protest sentiment growing explosively if he made the decision to poison Navalny, the politician's close ally Vladimir Milov said in a tweet.

Navalny is currently being treated at the Omsk ambulance hospital, he is in a coma in grave condition. Doctors at the hospital remain tight-lipped about his diagnosis.

Anatoliy Kalinichenko, deputy chief doctor of the hospital, told reporters that Navalny was in grave, yet sta-



Opposition leader Alexei Navalny addresses supporters during an unauthorised anti-Putin rally in Moscow in 2018. AFP FILE PHOTO

ble condition. Kalinichenko said doctors are considering a variety of diagnosis, including poisoning, but refused to give details, citing a law preventing doctors from disclosing confidential patient information.

State news agency reported that police were not considering deliberate poisoning, citing an anonymous source in law enforcement who said it is not unlikely that he drank or consumed something yesterday himself.

Yarmysh on Twitter bristled at that suggestion: Of course. It's just the tea was bad. This is what the state propaganda is going to do now tell that there was no deliberate poisoning, he (did something) accidentally, he (did something) himself.

Navalny's Foundation for Fighting Corruption has been exposing graft among government officials, including some at the highest level. Last month, he had to shut the foundation after a financially devastating lawsuit from Yevgeny Prigozhin, a businessman with close ties to the Kremlin. Belarus' authoritarian President Alexander Lukashenko accused Navalny last week of organising

or Strasbourg, saying that medics in Europe not only can offer better treatment, but also figure out which toxin Navalny was poisoned with.

Last year, Navalny was rushed to a hospital from prison where he was serving a sentence following an administrative arrest, with what his team said was suspected poisoning. Doctors then said he had a severe allergic attack and discharged him back to prison the following day.

Navalny's Foundation for Fighting Corruption has been exposing graft among government officials, including some at the highest level.

Last month, he had to shut the foundation after a financially devastating lawsuit from Yevgeny Prigozhin, a businessman with close ties to the Kremlin. Belarus' authoritarian President Alexander Lukashenko accused Navalny last week of organising

unprecedented mass protests against his re-election that have rocked Russia's ex-Soviet neighbour since August 9.

He did not, however, provide any evidence and that claim was one of many blaming foreign forces for the unrest.

Like many other opposition politicians in Russia, Navalny has been frequently detained by law enforcement and harassed by pro-Kremlin groups. In 2017, he was attacked by several men who threw antiseptic in his face, damaging one eye.

The most prominent member of Russia's opposition, Navalny campaigned to challenge Putin in the 2018 presidential election, but was barred from running.

He set up a network of campaign offices across Russia and has since been putting forward opposition candidates in regional elections, challenging members of Russia's ruling party, United Russia.

One of his associates in Khabarovsk, a city in Russia's Far East that has been engulfed in mass protests against the arrest of the region's governor, was detained just last week after calling for a strike at a rally. In the interview with Echo Moskovsky, Yarmysh said she believed the suspected poisoning was connected to this year's regional election campaign.

Vyacheslav Gimadi, a lawyer with Navalny's foundation, said the team is requesting Russia's Investigative Committee open a criminal probe.

Doctors are considering a variety of diagnosis, including poisoning, but refused to give details, citing a law preventing doctors from disclosing confidential patient information.

State news agency reported that police were not considering deliberate poisoning, citing an anonymous source in law enforcement who said it is not unlikely that he drank or consumed something yesterday himself.

Navalny's Foundation for Fighting Corruption has been exposing graft among government officials, including some at the highest level.

Last month, he had to shut the foundation after a financially devastating lawsuit from Yevgeny Prigozhin, a businessman with close ties to the Kremlin. Belarus' authoritarian President Alexander Lukashenko accused Navalny last week of organising

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 20 AUGUST

## Scientists develop prototype coronavirus breathalyser test

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

BEIJING, 20 AUGUST

Scientists have developed a prototype device that non-invasively detects the novel coronavirus in the exhaled breath of Covid-19 patients, an invention if validated with further studies, may lead to a reduction in the number of unneeded confirmatory tests, and lower the burden on the hospitals.

According to the researchers, including those from the University of Science and Technology of China, current Covid-19 testing is a time-consuming laboratory procedure in addition to being uncomfortable.

In order to reduce transmission and mortality rates, they said healthcare systems need quick, inexpensive, and

easy-to-use tests. In the current study, published in the journal *ACS Nano*, the scientists developed a sensor based on special materials made of ultrasmall nanoparticles that could detect Covid-19 in exhaled breath, similar to a breathalyser test for alcohol intoxication.

The device is made of an array of gold nanoparticles linked to molecules that are sensitive to various volatile organic compounds (VOCs), which the researchers said are emitted by viruses and the cells they infect.

Although the test needs to be validated in more patients, the scientists said if the method is confirmed to be effective, it could be useful for screening large populations to determine which individuals need further testing.

## Scientists allay fears on 'Malaysia strain'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 20 AUGUST

The mutant form of the novel coronavirus reported from Malaysia as being 10 times more infectious is not a concern for India as it is widely prevalent here and isn't any more virulent than the strain originating in Wuhan, say scientists.

The D614G strain of the virus was discovered in Malaysia from a cluster, including a restaurant owner returning from India, the country's Director General of Health said in a Facebook post this week.

His assertion that it was "found to be 10 times more infectious and is easily spread by an individual superspread" created a flutter but scientists here dispelled fears and said there is nothing to worry about.

Ray said even a highly infectious and transmissible variant of the virus might actually have a lesser ability to cause disease in humans.

In July, a study in the jour-

According to virologist Upasana Ray, the mutation may have just been reported in Malaysia but is not new for the world.

"We saw it happening in April and it eventually dominated many countries. It is new for Malaysia but is not a new mutation," the senior scientist at Kolkata's CSIR-Indian Institute of Chemical Biology said.

While some reports claim the mutation is capable of enhancing the infectivity of the virus, this is not well established and also does not necessarily indicate more virulence or harmfulness of the disease.

Ray said even a highly infectious and transmissible variant of the virus might actually have a lesser ability to cause disease in humans.

In July, a study in the journal *Nature* by scientists, including Bette Korber from the Los Alamos National Laboratory in the US, noted that a variant of the novel coronavirus, dubbed 'D614G', can infect more lab-grown cells than other strains.

The study said this mutant

**The D614G strain of the virus was discovered in Malaysia from a cluster, including a restaurant owner returning from India, the country's Director General of Health said in a FB post this week**

more rapidly in lab-grown cells. This mutation is part of the spike protein that the novel coronavirus uses to enter host cells.

The strain with the D614G mutation, dubbed the 'G clade', became widely prevalent in India even as far back as April, agreed Kumar Somasundaram, professor of Microbiology and Cell Biology at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bangalore.

The G clade, or variant, currently makes up about 70-75 percent of the cases in India, he explained.

While the original "wild type" of the virus from the first epicentre of the pandemic in Wuhan, China, had the D clade of the virus, much of the outbreak in India began from infected people returning from Europe with the G clade.

"In February-March, the viruses we detected in Indian patients came mainly from Europe, and to some extent from the Middle East and Oceania. And Europe, even then, had an enrichment of the G clade virus. And then this strain started growing more and more in prevalence in India," Somasundaram said.

look at those analysed in June, almost 95 per cent are G clade cumulatively if you add up all the samples that have been analysed over the months, the G clade makes up 70-75 percent of the cases in India," he explained.

While the original "wild type" of the virus from the first epicentre of the pandemic in Wuhan, China, had the D clade of the virus, much of the outbreak in India began from infected people returning from Europe with the G clade.

The G clade, or variant, currently makes up about 70-75 percent of the cases in India, he explained.

While the original "wild type" of the virus from the first epicentre of the pandemic in Wuhan, China, had the D clade of the virus, much of the outbreak in India began from infected people returning from Europe with the G clade.

"In February-March, the viruses we detected in Indian patients came mainly from Europe, and to some extent from the Middle East and Oceania. And Europe, even then, had an enrichment of the G clade virus. And then this strain started growing more and more in prevalence in India," Somasundaram said.

## Hong Kong slams US decision to suspend treaties

HONG KONG, 20 AUGUST

The Hong Kong government on Thursday condemned the US' decision to suspend bilateral extradition and tax exemption treaties with the semi-autonomous Chinese city, saying it was being used as a pawn in geopolitics.

On Wednesday, the US suspended its extradition treaty with Hong Kong, becoming the latest country to do so after Canada, Australia and Britain suspended such agreements.

The US' unilateral decision reflects its disrespect for bilateralism and multilateralism under the current administration and should be condemned by the international community, the statement said. The HKSAR Government strongly objects to and deplores the US' action, which is widely seen as a move to create troubles in China-US relationship, using Hong Kong as a pawn.

The government said that the bilateral agreements were not preferential treatment given to Hong Kong, but were negotiated in good faith to benefit both parties.

Hong Kong has faced mounting international pressure over the implementation of a national security law, approved by Beijing, which has been viewed as an attack on the one country, two systems framework under which the city has been governed since its return to China in 1997. Jeffrey Bader, a former US diplomat, said the actions taken so far are unlikely to dissuade China.



*Obama was a 'terrible' and 'ineffective' president.  
I see the horror that he's left us*

US PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP

## WEATHER

CITY	MAX (°C)	MIN (°C)
SINGAPORE	31	27 CL
HONG KONG	31	27 CL
TOKYO	36	26 S
LONDON	23	16 CL
DUBAI	39	33 CL
SAN FRANCISCO	21	14 S
NEW YORK	31	22 CL
MOSCOW	23	12 S

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

## THUMBNAILS



French president Macron welcomes German Chancellor Angela Merkel in Bormes-les-Mimosas, south-east of France, on Thursday. AFP

**Israel tanks shell Gaza:**  
Israeli tanks shelled Hamas positions in the Gaza Strip overnight in response to continued waves of incendiary balloons across the border, according to the army said. The cross-border violence came despite the Egyptian security's attempts to end the flare-up. AFP

**Iraq PM to meet Trump:**  
Iraqi PM Mustafa al-Kadhimi will meet US President Donald Trump for the first time in Washington on Thursday, with the presence of American troops in the country at the top of his agenda. The meeting comes as attacks on American targets by pro-Iranian fighters have been on the rise and with Teheran and Washington competing for influence in Iraq, he gulf between pro-Iranian factions and Baghdad's US-friendly premier is growing. AFP



Harini Krishnan (R) and her daughter, the co-California State Director of South Asians for Biden poses with a cardboard cut out of Harris ahead of the third day of the virtual Democratic National Convention. AFP

## Sikhs, Muslims made to 'feel suspect', Obama slams Trump

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW YORK, 20 AUGUST

Minority communities like Sikhs and Muslims have been made to "feel suspect" for the way they worshipped, former US president Barack Obama has said while accepting the Democratic Party's nomination to be the running mate of the presidential candidate Joe Biden.

In her acceptance speech, Harris paid tribute to the Black women that came before her and she vowed to fight for the nation.

"Let's fight with conviction. Let's fight with hope. Let's fight with confidence in ourselves, and a commitment to each other," she said. She profoundly remembered her mother from Tamil Nadu.

Harris said her mother raised her and her sister to be proud, strong Black women. And she raised us to know and be proud of our Indian heritage. She taught us to put family first, the family you're born into and the family you choose.

In reference to her Indian heritage, Harris used a Tamil expression in speaking of my uncles, my aunts my chitthis.

Harris said she was there standing on her mother's shoulders, a woman who came here from India at age 19 to pursue her dream of curing cancer. At the University of California, Berkeley, she met my father, Donald Harris who had come from Jamaica to study economics.

Whatever our backgrounds, we're all the children of Americans who fought the good fight. Great grandparents working in fire traps and sweatshops without rights or representation," Obama said.

"Irish and Italians and Asians and Latinos told to go back where they came from. Jews and Catholics, Muslims and Sikhs, made to feel suspect for the way they worshipped. Black Americans chained and whipped and hanged. Spun on trying to sit at lunch counters. Beaten for trying to vote," he said.

The first Black president of the US said that for long, Americans from these communities were on the receiving end of a democracy that had fallen short all their lives.

elect a president who will bring something different, something better, and do the important work. A president who will bring all of us together—Black, White, Latino, Asian, Indigenous—to achieve the future we collectively want, Harris said, making a passionate plea before Americans

Former vice president Joe Biden and Harris will challenge Trump and his Vice-President Mike Pence in the 3 November election. We must

come together. My brother appreciates it. He can feel it.

The electorate ultimately will decide whether Biden in fact offers a bridge back to a pre-Trump version of normal, a path forward to a more equitable society or some combination. Voters' most immediate consideration, though, may be that he is not the incumbent.

Everything that Donald

Trump is, my brother is the polar opposite. I don't have to make him bigger than he is, said sister Val. Joe's the right person at the right time for all the right reasons. Biden has used his convention to showcase what his campaign hopes will be a winning coalition.

Prime-time hours have been sprinkled with Republicans. Former Ohio Gov John Kasich endorsed Biden and assured that he had no worries Biden might make a sharp left turn in office.

I knew Joe as Vice President. I knew Joe on the campaign trail. But I first got to know Joe as the father of my friend, she said. And here's the thing: We can do better and deserve so much more, she said.

Alleging that right now, the US has a president who turns our tragedies into political weapons, Harris said that Biden will be a president who turns our challenges into purpose. Joe will bring us together to build an economy that doesn't leave anyone behind. Where a good-paying job is the floor, not the ceiling. Joe will bring us together to end this pandemic and make sure that we are prepared for the next one, she said.

Biden and his wife Jill joined Harris and her husband Douglas Emhoff on stage while maintaining social distancing in view of the Covid-19 pandemic that forced the Democrats to hold the four-day convention virtually.

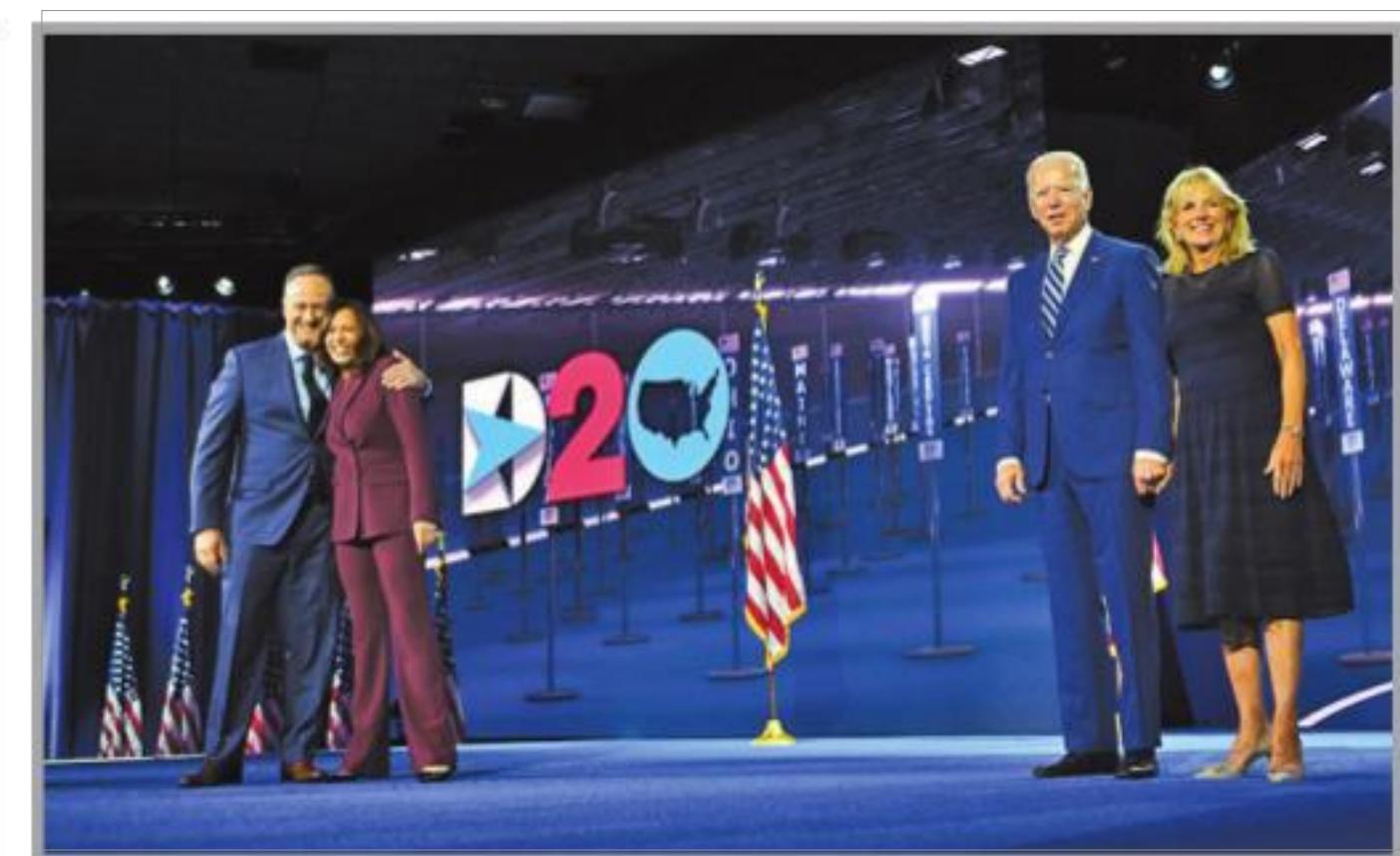
Harris is the first Indian-American to be selected for the second-highest elected office of the United States after that of the president.

She is also the first-ever Black and first-ever African American to be nominated as a vice-presidential candidate by a major political party.

If elected in the 3 November presidential elections, Harris, whose mother is from India and father from Jamaica, would be the first-ever women vice president of the United States. Harris has had a stellar career beginning as a public prosecutor in California.

She has been a county district attorney; the district attorney for San Francisco the first woman and first African-American elected to the position.

She was also the first female African-American to become California's attorney general. In 2017, she became the second African-American woman to join the Senate, winning the California seat vacated by Senator Barbara Boxer.



Democratic V-P nominee Kamala Harris and her husband Douglas Emhoff stand on stage socially distanced to former vice-president and presidential nominee Joe Biden and his wife Jill Biden at the end of the third day of the Democratic National Convention, Wilmington late Wednesday. AFP

## For Joe Biden, long path to a potentially crucial presidency

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
WASHINGTON, 20 AUGUST

When Joe Biden steps to the podium on Thursday night as the Democratic Party's presidential nominee, he will offer himself to a wounded, meandering nation as balm and as a bridge.

A 77-year-old steeped in the American political establishment for a half-century, Biden cannot himself embody the kind of generational change that Presidents John F Kennedy or Bill Clinton represented.

Even with wide-ranging proposals for government action on health care, taxation and the climate crisis, he will never be the face of a burgeoning progressive movement. As a white man, Biden cannot know personally the systemic racism now at the forefront of a national reckoning over centuries-old social and economic inequities.

But the former vice president, six-term senator and twice failed presidential candidate draws plenty on lived experience two generations spent on each end of Pennsylvania Avenue, a record that mixes partisan street-fighting with bipartisan deal-making and bonhomie, and a personal journey of middle-class mores, individual struggle and family heartbreak.

That is how he is presenting himself as the person to lead the country beyond the tumultuous tenure of President Donald Trump.

"There's great seriousness of purpose here, said Valerie Biden Owens, the candidate's younger sister and, until his current White House bid, perennial campaign manager. We are in a time of struggle. We are in a time of grief, she continued, nodding to the novel coronavirus, its economic fallout and the reckoning on race. All of this has

Aspiring medical students in limbo because of exam fiasco in Britain

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
LONDON, 20 AUGUST

Chris Byrne and Khadijah E. Olonade worked hard to get into medical school, but the computer said no.

The teenagers are among thousands of graduating high school students scrambling for spots at British universities following the government's disastrous decision to award final grades using an algorithm. The process was intended to replace exams canceled because of the coronavirus pandemic, but unfairly lowered the marks of many students and froze them out of their chosen schools.

While the programme was ditched after an outcry, and affected students had their grades raised, universities and families are still picking up the pieces. Many 18-year-olds don't know if they will be attending college in the fall.

Aspiring doctors are particularly in limbo because the hands-on training medical schools provide means the number of slots can't easily be expanded to accommodate those turned away by the algorithm debacle.

I'm stuck waiting, Byrne said. There has been no word about if there's going to be enough medicine places for me to get in this year. There's just a lot of uncertainty about what's going to happen.

Universities offer final-year high school students places based on grades predicted by teachers, but admission is contingent on final exams, known as A levels.

This year, with schools largely shut since March and exams canceled, education authorities in England attempted to standardize results by running students' teacher-predicted grades through an algorithm that compared them with their schools' past performance.

High-achieving students at under-performing schools, many in deprived areas, ended up with marks downgraded, while students at above-average schools kept their predicted grades. AP

## USA seeks restoration of UN sanctions against Iran

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
WASHINGTON, 20 AUGUST

The Trump administration is set to demand the restoration of all international sanctions on Iran in a move that will further isolate US at the United Nations, test the credibility of the UN Security Council and possibly deal a fatal blow to one of former President Barack Obama's signature foreign policy achievements.

At President Donald Trump's direction, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo will travel to New York on Thursday to notify the world body that the US is invoking the snapback mechanism in the Security Council resolution that endorsed the 2015 Iran nuclear deal. But the US move faces steep opposition and could prompt a revolt from the council's other members.

None of them believes the US has the standing to do it because Trump withdrew from the nuclear deal two years ago.

Thus, invoking snapback

will set the stage for a contentious dispute at the world body with the US insisting it has done something that no one else recognizes as valid.

It's possible the US call will simply be ignored by other UN members an outcome that could call into question the Security Council's relevance and ability to enforce its own legally binding decisions.

But Trump and Pompeo

have made no secret of their intention to pursue the con-

troversial diplomatic move particularly in the wake of the administration's embarrassing defeat last week at the Security Council on extending the arms embargo on Iran that expires in October.

The US won just one other yes vote, with China and Russia opposed and the 11 other members abstaining.

As with the arms embargo,

Russia, China and India bitterly oppose reimposing other UN sanctions on Iran.

So do other Security Council members, including US allies Britain and France, which are hoping to preserve the nuclear deal in the event Trump loses his bid for a second term in November's presidential election and his Democratic opponent Joe Biden rejoins the agreement.

Meanwhile, China has said

that since the US is no longer a party to the nuclear deal it has no right to demand the Security Council to activate the rapid reinstatement of sanctions.

Russia has accused the US of unleashing a politically-motivated campaign against Iran that runs counter to international law.

A phone at the office of Bannon's lawyer went unanswered Thursday morning. A spokeswoman for Bannon did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The United States intends to restore virtually all of the previously suspended United Nations sanctions on Iran, Trump said on Wednesday.

It's a snapback. As set out by the resolution enshrining the 2015 deal, snapback would re-impose UN sanctions that were eased in exchange for curbs on Iran's nuclear pro-

## Ex-Trump adviser Steve Bannon charged in border wall scheme

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
NEW YORK, 20 AUGUST



Prosecutors allege Bannon and three others orchestrated a scheme to defraud thousands of donors in connection with an online crowdfunding campaign that raised more than \$25 million to build a wall along the southern border of the United States

According to the indictment, Bannon promised that 100 per cent of the donated money would be used for the project, but the defendants collectively used hundreds of thousands of dollars in a manner inconsistent with the organization's public representations. The indictment said they faked invoices and sham vendor arrangements, among other ways, to hide what was really happening.

Before he was tapped to lead Trump's 2016 presidential campaign in its critical final months, Bannon led the con-

servative Breitbart News. After Trump was elected, he moved on to a top White House strategy post.

The blunt-spoken, combative Bannon was the voice of a nationalistic, outsider conservatism, and he pushed Trump to follow through on some of his most contentious campaign promises, including his travel ban for some foreigners and his decision to pull out of the Paris climate change agreement.

While the programme was ditched after an outcry, and affected students had their grades raised, universities and families are still picking up the pieces. Many 18-year-olds don't know if they will be attending college in the fall.

Aspiring doctors are particularly in limbo because the hands-on training medical schools provide means the number of slots can't easily be expanded to accommodate those turned away by the algorithm debacle.

I'm stuck waiting, Byrne said. There has been no word about if there's going to be enough medicine places for me to get in this year. There's just a lot of uncertainty about what's going to happen.

Universities offer final-year high school students places based on grades predicted by teachers, but admission is contingent on final exams, known as A levels.

This year, with schools largely shut since March and exams canceled, education authorities in England attempted to standardize results by running students' teacher-predicted grades through an algorithm that compared them with their schools' past performance.

High-achieving students at under-performing schools, many in deprived areas, ended up with marks downgraded, while students at above-average schools kept their predicted grades. AP

## California hit by wildfires, heat, unhealthy smoky air

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
SAN FRANCISCO, 20 AUGUST

Northern Californians were confronted with multiple threats as wildfires, unhealthy smoky air, extreme heat, the looming possibility of power outages and an ongoing pandemic forced many to weigh the risks of staying indoors or going outside.

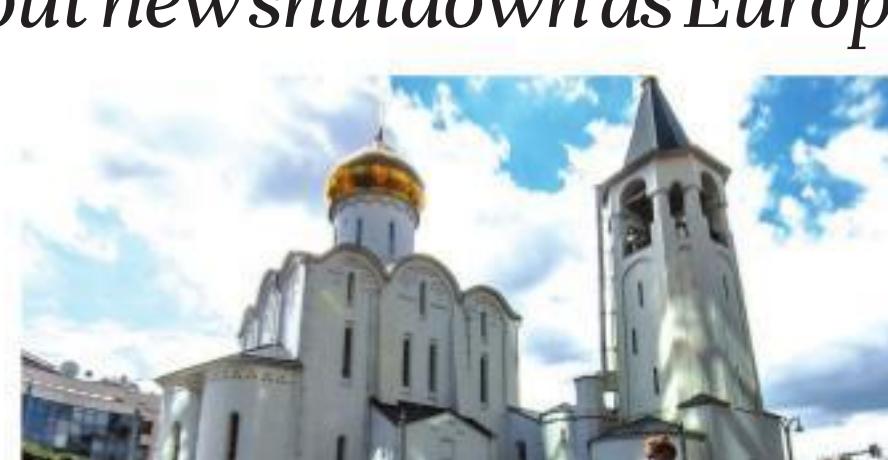
Ash sprinkled the ground and smoke cast an eerie glow over much of the San Francisco Bay Area on Wednesday, creating unhealthy air quality and heightening concerns about people most prone to respiratory illnesses.

An ozone pollution reached unhealthy levels in some places, the region's air district and public health officials urged people to stay inside with windows and doors shut until the smoke subsided.

There was no relief in sight.

## France rules out new shutdown as Europe grapples with surging cases

THE STRAITS TIMES/ANN  
PARIS, 20 AUGUST



A woman wearing a face mask walks past a church in central Moscow on Thursday.

wave of the disease. The uptick in cases in recent weeks has been blamed on social gatherings and travellers, but officials are reluctant to resort to the strict lockdowns imposed during the initial peak of the pandemic in March and April.

"We cannot shut down the country because the collateral damage of confinement is considerable," Mr Macron, who hosts German Chancellor Angela Merkel for talks later on Thursday, said in an interview with Paris Match magazine.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, meanwhile, is on vacation with his family and has not come out to address the public even as bad news piles up. Governments across Europe are tightening

restrictions to combat the spread. In France, masks must now be worn in busy outdoor areas of Paris and Marseilles. Toulouse will require general mask-wearing from 21 August, Agence France-Presse reported, the first large French city to do so.

The country's response must be to "speed up vaccines, guarantee their access, and provide the best health response given what we know", Mr Macron told Paris Match, adding that, if necessary, authorities should resort to local "targeted" lockdowns.

Testing, tracing, isolating the infected and broadening the wearing of masks when necessary are also key, he said.



## Era of mindful entrepreneurship

**Organisations are coming up with new strategies and plans that may have quantifiable business outcomes and positive environmental effect**

KUNAL SOOD

The global pandemic is forcing us to slow down, reflect and witness what is happening to our world. It is time that individuals and businesses start to rethink how to have a positive impact on the environment. Today, customers, employees and stakeholders expect organisations

to utilise their resources to take action and solve the world's most significant problems like climate change, ocean plastics, poverty, food (including wet markets) and water shortages. We have an extraordinary opportunity to make long-lasting and sustainable global changes towards improving the human condition, while serving the greater good of the planet.

Social impact techniques are intended to improve an organisation's public standing through designing a double bottom line approach in aligning their assets with their values - not just the brand image. These strategies become concrete and measurable plans that have quantifiable business outcomes and positive environmental effects.

Furthermore, they maximise the probability and accelerate the pace of solving our social and environmental challenges. However, executing these strategies is easier said than done. As a stark contrast to most Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) models, social impact strategies are strategically implemented to ensure profits and revenues are always maximised in tandem to public deliverables.

Consequently, setting up a strong social impact system in the post-

Covid world is the foundation for good business in the future. As we reimagine the new normal, this system will help create a better brand image for established companies, while galvanising the workforce around a massive transformative purpose that will allow the organisation to invoke a culture of excellence and resilience.

New companies are now progressively considering social impact to be a key ingredient to long-term sustainability and success. Today, startups are doing their homework about the future and designing strategies to define their key social impact objectives and needs. These organisations are upholding their responsibility to live their values in action, by fulfilling the claims they make.

Exponential Organisations with female leadership and a global mind-

set for attracting and retaining global clients have been working hard for months now as they fight the impact of Covid-19. Apparel industry leaders began by making face masks, distilleries followed them to make hand sanitiser, and automobile manufacturers raced to make necessary ventilators. This is the beginning of an era of mindful entrepreneurship.

Corporate citizenship as a way to continue to exist in the market is evolving. These actions have become an essential part of the world's fight against a global pandemic for the health and well-being of people and planet. The time is now to create a social impact strategy for your organisation that can make the impossible possible and transform our world for a better future.

The writer is founder, We The Planet

## NEW WAVE OF OPPORTUNITIES

**In trying times like this, start-ups are coming up with apps to ease boredom**

AKSHAY PRUTHI

The Covid-19 lockdown has significantly impacted social interactions. Away from their families and friends and forced to self-isolate, people are experiencing loneliness, anxiety and depression for which there is no immediate respite. Celebrities are not exempt from this loneliness. With the entertainment industry having come to an abrupt halt and public appearances on hold, celebrities are bereft of the very fanfare that their lives are all about. At times like this, communication and kindness can be the ray of light that saves both celebrities and fans from succumbing to depression. New start-ups are taking positive steps in this regard.

The last few months have witnessed the growing popularity of apps such as UNLU that allow fans from all over India to directly connect with their favourite celebrities for a greeting, life advice or a heart-to-heart comment. Roping in celebrities from across sports, cinema, music, lifestyle and astrology, these apps create a uniquely personalised experience for fans while allowing celebrities to connect with their audiences without middlemen coming in between.

Fans who sign up can request personalised video messages with birthday wishes or life advice from the celebrities they admire the most, including A-listers from Bollywood. These apps offer a safe, creative and



unique way for fans to celebrate an occasion along with their chosen star.

What makes these apps stand apart is its focus on giving both celebrities and fans an opportunity to get what they want. While fans can feel heartened to receive one-on-one attention from their favourite stars on a special occasion or while going through a rough time, celebrities can use the platform to build on their star

status and expand their fanbase.

This differentiates them from social media platforms, where millions of fan messages get sent and ignored every day. Moreover, such apps cater to both A-list celebrities and up-and-coming influencers. A-listers in music, comedy or television whose projects may all be on hold and who are experiencing loneliness and a lack of purpose can use this

opportunity to connect with fans in a personal way.

At the same time, new influencers like social media bloggers can use these apps to grow their brand and earn some extra money, video requests being a paid service. The greater the demand for videos, the higher the prices a celebrity can charge. In trying times like this, values like honesty and humility become

more important than ever as everyone, celebrities included, struggle to stay healthy and positive. The right message at the right time from the right person - particularly a person one looks up to and idolises - can make a world of difference, and a new wave of online platforms is making it easier for that to happen.

The writer is co-founder, UNLU

## PLUS POINTS

### Proper care



Covid-19 has thrown challenges for patients suffering from chronic diseases like chronic kidney diseases (CKD) in tier II and tier III cities. To reduce such complexities, healthcare provider Ujala Cygnus Healthcare launched a five-bedded dedicated dialysis care centre in its Varanasi unit recently, so that the CKD patients do not miss their scheduled dialysis.

The centre was inaugurated by Bank of Baroda's branch manager Ram Arya in the presence of Ujala Cygnus Healthcare's zonal manager Dr Prasun Kumar, urologists Dr Tarun Gupta and Dr Vinita Shrivastav, and unit head Dr Ankur Rajoriya.

The hospital has taken various steps to ensure patients do not catch any infection. Dialysis personnel, attendants and caregivers are taking proper protection while they are inside the dialysis unit. Patients with suspected Covid-19 are being dialysed in a separate area. Staff caring for those does not look after other patients during the same shift.

### Humble tribute



Delhi Public School (DPS) Joka adopted a combination of online and on-campus approach to celebrate the 74th Independence Day. The flag was hoisted by the principal within the school premises in the presence of pro vice chairman Pawan Agarwal, teachers. This was followed by a virtual assembly of the pro vice chairman, principal, headmaster, teachers and students for a cultural programme to pay tribute to our freedom fighters, soldiers and medical practitioners - who are tirelessly trying to combat Covid-19. The heart touching musical and dance performances to patriotic beats articulated love and respect. The programme came to an end with a thoughtful message from the principal.

### Of celebration



The Scindia School went online to celebrate Independence Day. Students participated in the cultural events and watched flag hoisting from their homes. The flag was hoisted by the chief guest Yashwant Mahadik, Global Corporate President Lupin Inc, a Scindia school alumnus along with the principal Madhav Deo Saraswat at the school.

Mahadik spoke about the school's dynamic curriculum that was truly liberating during his days. In the second part of the programme at the Astachal, floral tribute was paid to the father of the nation. This was followed by a minute's silence and relevant speeches by a teacher and student. The event ended with a performance by the teacher's choir.

### Mutual work



BEML teamed up with IIT Kanpur in the field of UAV and NASSCOM Centre of Excellence (CoE) for artificial intelligence (AI) and internet of things (IoT), an initiative of Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and state government of Karnataka, Haryana, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh in the virtual presence of Rajnath Singh, defence minister and other officials recently.

Dr Deepak Kumar Hota, CMD BEML exchanged the signed copies with Sanjeev Malhotra, CEO, NASSCOM Center of Excellence after signing the MoU. The tie-up aims at technical support for implementation of AI and IoT in BEML products and to set up an incubation centre for start-ups with a view to achieve self-reliance and foster innovation and technological development in defence and aerospace by engaging various industries.

