# THE ASIAN AGE

**NEW DELHI MONDAY 10 AUGUST 2020** 



NATION 3

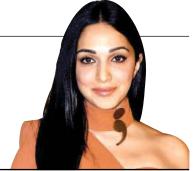
Big B shares work 'anxieties' as HC quashes 'discriminatory' orders on senior artistes



NATION 4

CISF official asked if I am Indian as I don't know Hindi: DMK MP Kanimozhi TABLOID 16

Sources indicate Varun and Kiara could reunite for a KJo film



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Barcelona's Argentine forward Lionel Messi celebrates after scoring a goal during the UEFA Champions League match with Napoli at Camp Nou stadium in Barcelona on Saturday. - AFP

### **ED summons Rhea** today after brother grilled for 18 hours

Mumbai: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) questioned Showik Chakraborty, brother of actor Rhea Chakraborty, for about 18 hours and has summoned the actress again for questioning on Monday in connection with the money laundering case linked to the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput. Following questioning of Rhea on Friday, the agency is probing the trail of ₹2.5 crore worth fixed deposit of the late actor, to ascertain if it was diverted to Chakraborty.
Full report on Page 4

### **10 killed in Andhra Covid facility blaze**

Amaravati: As many as 10 patients died at a star hotel converted to a Covid treatment centre on Sunday when panic-stricken inmates tried to flee a fire suspected to have been caused by a short circuit, the government said. Andhra **Pradesh Disaster Response** and Fire Services Department rescued 32 people. Full report on Page 4

### **11 Pak Hindus** found dead in Rai

Jodhpur: Eleven members of a family of Pakistan Hindu migrants were found dead at a farm in Rajasthan's Jodhpur district on Sunday morning, police said. The dead included five children and four women. Full report on Page 4

### COUNTERPOINT





Max: 31°C Min: 27°C **RH:** 85% **Rain:** 60%

Forecast: Scattered rains

### **ASTROGUIDE**

Sarvari: Dakshinayana Tithi: Shravana Bahula Shashti till 6.42 am Star: Ashwini till 10.04 pm **Varjyam:** 5.34 pm to 7.22 pm Durmuhurtam: 12.47 pm to 1.38 pm; 3.19 pm to 4.10 pm Rahukalam: 7.30 pm to 9 pm

SUNSET TODAY 7.04 PM **SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.47 AM** MOONRISE TOMORROW 11.07 PM **MOONSET TODAY 11.28 AM** 

## 101 defence items, weapons on import ban 'negative list'

■ No import of 69 items by Dec, all by 2025; domestic industry boost

PAWAN BALI NEW DELHI, AUG. 9

Defence minister Rajnath Singh on Sunday announced a "negative list" of 101 defence platforms and weapons whose import will be banned progressively, starting December 2020, to boost the indigenisation of defence production under the "Atma Nirbhar Bharat" initiative.

The negative list includes artillery guns, assault rifles, corvettes, sonar systems, transport aircraft, light combat helicopters (LCHs) and radars.

By December 2025, the import of all defence items on the list will be totally barred, while 69 will not be imported from

December 2020 itself.
The defence ministry claimed with this embarcontracts worth ₹4 lakh crores will be placed with domestic industry in the next five to seven years. Of these, equipment and weapons of ₹1,30,000 crores each are likely for the Army and Air Force, while almost ₹1,40,000 crores worth of items are antici-

₹1L cr agri

finance plan

to boost farm

sector's infra

AGE CORRESPONDENT

The Centre on Sunday

announced a financing

facility of ₹1 lakh crore

under the Agriculture

Infrastructure Fund for

agri-entrepreneurs, star-

tups, agri-tech players

and farmer groups for

nurturing farm assets

and post-harvest man-

The fund, which was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is part of the government's "Atma

ernment's "Atma Nirbhar Bharat" initia-

tive to make farmers self-reliant.

These assets will enable farmers to get

greater value for their

produce, as they will be

able to store and sell at

higher prices, reduce

benefit a great deal. A loan amount

₹1 lakh crore will be made available to farmers over a period of four years. While ₹10,000

crores will be made

available between 2020

and 2021, ₹30,000 crores

will be provided in each

of the remaining three years. Farmers will also

get a subsidy of three per

The Prime Minister

also released the sixth

instalment of ₹17,100 crores to the bank

accounts of over 8.55

crore farmer beneficia-

ries under the Pradhan

Mantri Kisan Samman

Under the scheme,

launched in 2018 and

funded by the Centre,

each farmer gets direct support of up to ₹6,000 a

as

(PM-Kisan)

minimum

cent on interest.

Nidhi

scheme.

agement.

## 'Modi to present new outline

## for self-reliant India Aug. 15'

New Delhi, Aug. 9: PM Narendra Modi will present a new outline for a self-reliant India in his address to the nation from the ramparts of the Red Fort on August 15, defence minister Rajnath Singh said on Sunday. The defence minister

said various departments and ministries of the government are working seriously to implement Modi's ini-tiative for a self-reliant India and that it is an attempt to give a fresh dimension to Mahatma Gandhi's push for "Swadeshi".

pated by the Navy. "This decision will offer a great opportunity to India's defence industry to manufacture items in the negative list by using their own design and development capabilities, or adopting the technologies designed and devel-

New Delhi, Aug. 9: The

Congress must expedite

the process of finding a

arrest the growing public

perception that the party

is "adrift and rudderless"

senior Congress leader

Shashi Tharoor said on

Sunday. Mr Tharoor also

said that he certainly thinks Rahul Gandhi has

the "mettle, capability and

aptitude to once again lead

the party", but if he does

not wish to do so then the

party must "take action"

His comments assume

significance as they come

to elect a new chief.

full-term president

not allow any harm to India's self respect and sovereignty at any cost," he said. — PTI oped by DRDO to meet the requirements of the armed forces," the defence minister said. He said the ministry wanted to apprise the defence industry of the armed

forces' needs so they are

better prepared to realise the goal of indigenisation.

'If Rahul doesn't want to be chief, party must find someone else'

l0, with the party yet to

"I certainly believe we

should be clear about our

leadership going forward.

I welcomed Sonia ji's

appointment as interim

president last year, but I

do believe it's unfair to

her to expect her to carry

this burden indefinitely,

"We also need to arrest the growing public per-

ception, fuelled by a dis-

Mr Tharoor told PTI.

find her successor.

year as interim

chief on August

online event organised to pay tributes to

revolutionary freedom

Talking about the "Atmanirbhar" initiative, the defence minis-

ter said that the coron-

avirus pandemic has

shown that a country

may not be able to effec-

tively protect its sover-eignty if it is not self-reliant.

"Our government will

fighter Udham Singh.

tary affairs, led by CDS Gen. Bipin Rawat, will identify more items to be added to the negative list in the days ahead The negative list also

The department of mili-

includes wheeled armoured fighting vehicles, with an indicative import embargo date of December 2021, of which the Army is likely to contract almost 200 for over ₹5,000 crores. Similarly, the Navy is likely to place demands for submarines with an indicative import embargo date of December 2021, of which it expects to contract about six at a cost of almost ₹42,000 crores.

The defence ministry said the negative list was prepared after several rounds of consultations with all stakeholders, including the Army, Air Force, Navy, DRDO, defence PSUs, the Ordnance Factory Board and private industry.

The Centre recently hiked the FDI limit in defence manufacturing to 74 per cent, up from 49 per cent, to encourage foreign defence companies to set up factories in India.

Congress is adrift and

taking up the challenge of

Opposition," he said.
That is precisely what

the Congress needs to

urgently address by expe-

diting the process of find-

ing a full-term president,

through a participatory

and democratic process

that will offer the winning

candidate a legitimate

mandate and the credibil-

ity that will be indispens-

able in ushering in much-needed revival of the

party, he said.

credible

just ahead of missive media, that the

completing one rudderless, incapable of

years. The 74-year-old former Cong needs full-time chief to halt party 'drift': Tharoor

> matic community and other senior officials.
> "I am humbled by the opportunity given to me to serve my people again," he tweeted soon after starting his fourth innings

Mahinda Rajapaksa said the trust bestowed on him by the people will inspire him to continue to serve the coun-

try.
The Prime Minister vowed that he would ensure that Sri Lanka would embark on a progressive journey during his tenure. — PTI

More on Page 6



Sri Lanka President Gotabava Rajapaksa is blessed by his elder brother and former President Mahinda Rajapaksa after the latter was sworn in as the Prime Minister at Kelaniya Royal Buddhist temple in Colombo on Sunday.

### **Mahinda takes** charge as PM, Rajapaksas are in full control

**Colombo, Aug. 9:** Mahinda Rajapaksa was sworn in on Sunday as Sri Lanka's new Prime Minister at a centuries-old Buddhist temple after his party won a landslide victory in parliamentary elections that allowed the influential family to consolidate power for the next five

presidenť and Sri Lanka People's Party (SLPP) leader was administered the oath of office by his younger brother and President Gotabaya Rajapaksa at a gathering of Buddhist monks, representatives of the diplo-

Minister.

## **PMO** sets Sept deadline for final Naga pact

R.N. Ravi told to fix date, place to ink accord

MANOJ ANAND GUWAHATI, AUG. 9

The Centre has decided to

conclude the decades-old peace talks with the NSCN (I-M) and NNPGs (Naga National Political Groups) in Nagaland by September this year, for which a process of thrashing out differences over some of the minor rhetorical issues will start next week in meetings in New Delhi between the collective leadership of the NSCN (I-M) and the Prime Minister's special envoy for Naga talks R.N. Ravi, who is also the governor of Nagaland.

Saying that the Prime Minister's Office had set a September deadline for the final settlement of all Naga political issues, authoritative security sources told this newspaner that the date and place of signing of the historic peace accord, bringing an end to one of India's oldest armed insurgencies, is yet to be decided.

Saying that Mr Ravi was leaving for New

Delhi from Kohima on Tuesday, the sources said the NSCN (I-M) delega-

PAGE 3

Ravi 'hounding'

groups engaged in

talks: Naga bodies

complain to Modi

tion has already reached New Delhi for the talks. Saying that a consensus had already been created on a majority of the issues, apart from the demand of for a separate flag and constitution, the sources said the NSCN (I-M) was also insisting on some changes in the "language" of the final draft agreement that will be come up for discussion at the meeting. Indicating that

focus of the talks in New Delhi would also be to work out the date and place for signing of the peace accord, the sources said the interlocutor would also be asking the Naga rebel groups to submit the list of cadres and inventory of arms and ammunition. Stating that ■ Turn to Page 4

## 65K cases in a day, HealthMin says due to high testing

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, AUG. 9

Close to 65,000 coron-

wastage, and increase processing and value addition, the governavirus cases were detected in the past 24 hours, taking India's overall Today, our farmers cases past 21.5 lakhs till have a choice. If he wants to deal with his Sunday morning, as per the health ministry's data. produce in his field, he The biggest contributors can. Or he can directly to this single-day spike connect with the ware-Maharashtra and house or whoever pays the higher price," Mr Andhra Pradesh, which have reported over 10,000 Modi said, saying the agriculture sector will cases in a day, while Uttar Pradesh. Karnataka.

have started detecting a high number of cases.

Delhi, where the numbers had fallen impressively, is again reporting a high number of cases. Delhi's health minister, however, said the rise in Delhi's numbers was due to people from outside coming for testing and treatment, which was adding to its tally.

Union health ministry officials said such high numbers of positive cases ing. In a new high, India has scaled the peak of conducting more than seven lakh tests in a single day -7,19,364 tests were done in the past 24 hours. India has

so far done 2,41,06,535 tests. "Such high levels of testing will also lead to a high number of daily positive cases, but the states have been advised to firmly focus on comprehensive tracking, prompt isolation and effective treatment. Several meetings have

**COVID WATCH** 

**CASES ACROSS NATION PEOPLE CURED SO FAR** 

been held in the past week to engage with states that are showing a higher fatality rate," health min-

They added that such an approach of high testing has started showing results and recoveries are

also increasing exponentially — India recorded the highest number of recoveries in a single day, with 53,879 patients having recovered and discharged on Saturday. With this, the total number of recovered cases touched a high

of 14,80,884 on Sunday. "This is more than twice the number of active cases

recovered cases has touched another high of 2.36 times the active cases. which are all under medical attention either in home isolation or in hos-

pitals," officials said. With a higher number of recovered patients, the recovery rate is 68.78 per cent. The case fatality rate has fallen to 2.01 per cent, though 43,379 deaths were reported so far, of which 861 were in the last 24



Wife Sushma Sathe and younger son Dhananjay Sathe pay their respects to the mortal remains of Capt. Deepak Sathe during his funeral ceremony in Mumbai on Sunday. The mortal remains of Akhilesh Kumar Sharma, the co-pilot of the Air India Express plane that crashed in Kozhikode, were consigned to flames in Mathura on Sunday.

## 400 Taliban prisoners freed by Afghan council to enable talks ment. No date has been

**Kabul, Aug. 9:** A traditional Afghan council concluded Sunday with hundreds of delegates agreeing to free 400 Taliban members, paving the way for an early start to negotiations between Afghanistan's warring

The declaration read out in both of Afghanistan's official languages of Pashto and Farsi calls for an immediate start to negotiations and cease fire. The move looks to bring the United States a little closer to returning its troops and ending its longest military engage-

set but negotiations between Kabul's political leadership and the Taliban are expected to begin as early as next week and will most likely be held in the middle eastern state of Qatar, where the Taliban maintains a political office.

The Afghan negotiations were laid out in a peace deal signed by the United States and the Taliban in February. At the time of its signing it touted

Afghanistan's best chance at ending decades of war. Afghan

Ashraf Ghani praised delegates for their decision, urged the Taliban to stop fighting. Taliban political spokesman Shaheen said the decision was a good step, a positive

step. He said negotiations could start within one week of their prisoners being freed. As for a cease fire

Shaheen said the Taliban was committed to the deal it struck with the United States and according to that deal the cease fire will be one of the items to be discussed during the intra-Afghan

income support.

## IN BRIEF

### **AAP running from** responsibility: BJP

New Delhi: The Delhi BJP on Sunday attacked health minister Satyendar Jain for claiming that patients from outside the city are the reason for the rise in Covid cases here, and alleged that the AAP government was running away from its responsibility. Mr Jain has attributed the recent rise in cases to "patients from outside getting tested here". "I fail to understand whether it is Delhi chief minister or his ministers who consider outsiders and migrants in the city as a problem?" Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta questioned. "Earlier also, chief minister Arvind Kejriwal had said that people from Bihar come to Delhi with a ₹500 ticket and get back after availing treatment worth ₹5 lakh. Also, the AAP had denied treatment for people from other states, while the Centre had ensured treatment for them," Mr Gupta claimed. — PTI

### 2 bodies recovered

from Ganga Canal

Ghaziabad: A NDRF team on Sunday recovered the bodies of two men from the Ganga Canal near here, two days after their vehicle fell into it and they drowned, police said. They have been identified as Ashish Dhyani and Vinod Kumar, Superintendent of Police (Rural) Neeraj Kumar Jadaun said. On Friday, the men, along with their friends Paramvir and Sanjeev, were on their way to the Defence Research and Development Organisation in Chandigarh for some contract work when their vehicle fell into the canal in Hapur district. Paramvir, who was driving the car, managed to swim across the canal with the help of a police sub-inspector, while the others went missing. During a rescue operation the same night, the NDRF had pulled out the car with the help of a machine. The force searched for the three men on Saturday, but failed to trace them, the SSP said.

## 27-yr-old involved in

uprooting ATMs held New Delhi: A 27-year-old man allegedly involved in uprooting ATMs in Delhi and the National Capital Region was arrested on Sunday after a brief exchange of fire in south Nangaldewat village police said. The accused, identified as Arshad Khan, a resident of Rajasthan's Alwar district, was part of an interstate gang of robbers who targeted ATM booths across the NCR, they added. "We received specific information that the suspect would be coming in the area in the evening to commit a similar crime. So our team laid a trap and nabbed him after he was spotted coming in a car," DCP (Special Cell) P S

nered. Khan fired four shots at the personnel of the Special Cell of the Delhi Police who had gone to nab him, he said, adding that as the police team fired in self defence, one of the bullets hit the accused in his left leg

Kushwah said. On being cor-

### and he was overpowered. **'Monsoon can have**

**serious health issues**'

New Delhi: With the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, doctors at Motherhood Hospital have warned parents against a host of health related issues in kids that come along in this season. Heavy rainfall leads to a series of problems in the cities — be it water logging or floods. If parents don't pay attention to their child's health then the kid can become susceptible to diseases like viral fever, pneumonia, dengue, malaria, typhoid, and hepatitis A. "Some of the most common diseases which surface strongly during monsoon are vector borne. Diseases like dengue, chikungunya. and malaria spike during this season because a moist environment is the perfect breeding ground for mosquitoes. "It is important to identify the various breeding spots in the city and treat them timely to prevent a possible outbreak of diseases at a time when we are already reeling under the rising cases of coronavirus infection," said Dr Ramani Ranjan, a consultant paediatrician and neonatologist at

Motherhood Hospital in

## Delhi's edu board likely to be operational by 2021

Will be optional for private and govt schools, says Sisodia

AGE CORRESPONDENT with agecy inputs NEW DELHI, AUG. 9

Delhi's own school education board is expected to be operational by next year, however, unlike other states it will not be imposed on government schools, according to deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia.

Giving details of plans for setting up the state education board, Sisodia said the board will be in sync with the reforms proposed in the new National Education Policy (NEP) and the focus will be on continuous evaluation and not year-end exams.

'We have recently set up two committees for working on the proposed board as well as curriculum reforms. An ideal situation would be that we make it operational by next year. Initially, around 40 schools will be affiliated to the board, which could be either government or private," Mr Sisodia said.

"What happens in other state boards is that the private schools are free to whether they want to opt

**Delhi MCD** 

**2022 polls:** 

AAP picks

LS in-charge

New Delhi, Aug. 9: With an eye on the 2022 Delhi municipal elections, the

ruling AAP has appoint-

ed Lok Sabha in-charge,

district in-charge, dis-

trict communication in-

charge and assembly observers at all the 70 assembly constituen-cies, senior party leader

Gopal Rai said on

Chief minister Arvind Kejriwal took to Twitter

to wish the members in

"Best wishes to all new

office bearers. Work hard to strengthen AAP.

stronger and serve peo-

ple with greater zeal,

Addressing a press conference, Mr Rai said

the party will appoint

in-charge for all the

assembly constituencies

in the next phase, and

the in-charge at all 272 wards in the third

"The party is working

on restructuring the

organisation, keeping in

newly-appointed

snould emerge

Sunday.

AAP

he said.

phase.

### **Civic bodies to introduce NEP from** current academic session: Adesh

**SHASHI BHUSHAN** NEW DELHI, AUG. 9

Days after the Union government announced the new education policy (NEP), the BJP ruled municipal orations plan to introduce it from the current academic session. Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta

told this newspaper that

work has been started to

adopt the new curriculum based on the NEP. Last week, Mr Gupta held a discussion with the top leadership of BJP ruled three municipal corporations and directed them to start working on imple-

menting the new policy. "The new education policy will be implemented in all municipal schools in the current academic session and the consultation process has started. The new policy talks on overall development and empha-

for CBSE, ICSE or state

board, while government

board. We will have no

development," added Mr Gupta. The party also decided to rope in the academia for suggestions to design the new curriculum. "With the help of wellknown academicians, a new curriculum will be drafted soon for implemen-

sises on learning and skill

tation," said Delhi BJP. About 10 lakh students study in over 1,500 schools run by the three municipal corporations. The civic bodies impart primary education as mandated by the statute. BJP national vice president Shyam Jaju said that an awareness campaign and consulta-

education policy has been going on for the last two According to Mr Jaju, the party had held several rounds of consultation via webinar and online meetings in the last two months.

tion process for the new

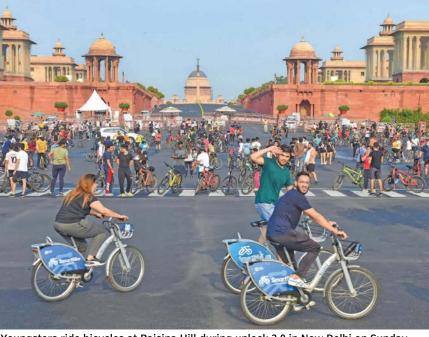
imposition. It will be optional for both government and private schools. We want to make the board so enriching and useful, that there is demand for it," he added. The Delhi government had last month constitut-

ed two committees to prepare the scheme and framework for the formation of the state education Board and curriculum reforms. The AAP dispensation

had announced the plan to set up a separate board of education for the national capital in its annual budget in March. Mr Sisodia, who is also Delhi's Education Delhi's Minister, said his government is studying the recently announced new

education policy "We are studying the policy in detail. We have already been working on some of the reforms proposed in it. There are a few anomalies but there are a few good things too. I have told the two com-

mittees that our board will be in sync with the National Education Policy because as a nation we are together but the focus will not be on evaluating students once a year and encouraging rote learning in process," he said.



Youngsters ride bicycles at Raisina Hill during unlock 3.0 in New Delhi on Sunday.

## Several highrises without STPs, penalty soon: Noida Authority

Noida, Aug 9: Several high-rise societies in Noida lack sewage treatment plants, while those are not working in accordance with the guidelines of the National Green Tribunal, officials said on

mind the upcoming MCD election. This work is going on from Most of these 33 socithe past one week, and will continue till August eties are located in Sector 20," he said. 7x area (referring to soci-"In this restructuring eties in sectors 74 to 79) and Sector 137 of the city, process, we are giving priority to the leaders where the Authority had carried out who had worked hard during the 2020 Delhi inspection on August 2

assembly election and and 8, they said. The inspection was done also in the difficult time of the Covid pandemic. to check the enforcement The restructuring is of the National Green taking place from the top to the booth level," Tribunal (NGT) order in pollution. We will be soon

penalising builders and Supertech the association of apart- Antriksh ments (AOAs) concerned for flouting rules, officials

"During the inspection, it was found that maximum societies have not even constructed sewage treatment plants (STPs). Matrott, Amrapali Silicon Sector 76, Assotech Windsor Court, Sikka Karmic and Aditya Urban Casa in Sector 78 are major among them," the Authority said in a state-

ment. "Some societies that have STPs were found to be functional but not in accordance with the NGT guidelines. Major among societies

Supertech Capetown, Antriksh Golfview – II, Sunshine Heights, AIMS Max Gardenia, GH - 08 in Sector 75, Max Valis, Paras Tierra Sector 137, Blossom County, Ajnara Home in Sector 137, and Antriksh Forrest," it stated.

The Authority said a report is being presented to the Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board and the NGT for action against the builders and AOAs concerned under the Water Conservation Act, 1976.

"The penalty amount against offenders will be calculated and notices sent to them. Such inspections would continue in the future also," it added.

under control: Kejriwal Jain blames outsiders for AGE CORRESPONDENT surge in coronavirus cases Delhi recorded 1,300 fresh

Asha hold placards and shout slogans during a protest to draw attention to their

Covid situation in city

plight of underpayment and lack of protection from Covid in New Delhi on Sunday.

cases of the novel coronavirus on Sunday taking the infection tally to over 1.45 lakh, while the death toll mounted to 4,111. As many as 1, 30,587 patients have recovered, migrated or been discharged while the number of active cases stood at 10,729. Thirteen people died of Covid in the last 24 hours, taking the death toll to 4,111. While Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday said the Covid situation in Delhi is under control and the recovery

rate is improving.
Speaking at the inauguration of a hospital in Ambedkar Nagar, he said in case the situation takes a turn for the worse, the government is fully prepared to deal with it.

The Covid situation is under control. All parameters are good, the recovery rate is improving, positivity ratio and deaths have reduced," Mr Kejriwal said.

He said the inauguration of the hospital is a step towards strengthening the health infrastruc-ture in the city. "We have gradually increased the number of Covid beds,"

"The hospital was conceived in 2013. It is a 600-bed hospital. We are inaugurating the first 200 beds which will be used for the

New Delhi, Aug. 9: Delhi reports that coronavirus Satyendar Jain on Sunday attributed the recent rise in Covid cases in the national capital to "patients from outside getting tested here". On Šaturday, 1,404 new

Covid-19 cases and 16 deaths were reported in Delhi, taking the tally of cases to 1,44,127. While 1,130 people recov-

ered from the infection on Saturday, there are 10,668 active cases. The death toll rose to 4,098, Jain told reporters. The number of active

cases on Saturday rose to 10,667, from 10,409 the previous day, according to the Delhi government's health bulletin.

cases are increasing in the national capital. Many Delhi are getting tested here, hence the rise in the number of cases. There is otherwise a decline in cases here," Mr Jain told

reporters.
The health minister also said hospital admissions have also increased due to the patients coming from outside Delhi. In June, Delhi lieu-

tenant governor Anil Baijal had overruled the AAP government's decision to reserve hospital beds in city-run and private hospitals only for residents of the national capital afflicted with the coronavirus infection.

launch event.
"I pray to God that these 200 beds are not needed in

the future... we never get to a situation where we have to use these beds. But even if the situation becomes bad again, we are fully prepared to deal with it," he said. CM Kejriwal said the

rest of the beds and ICUs will become operational within a month-and-ahalf. "This hospital was scheduled to begin operations after a few months, patients," he said at the but it has been inaugurat-

ed today. I want to thank and congratulate engineers, doctors, and all the people for their efforts in making this 200-bed hospital available for the people of Delhi," he said. On July 25, CM Kejriwal

had inaugurated a 450bed hospital in Burari. The hospital will eventually have a total of 700 There were 10,667 active

Covid cases in Delhi on Saturday while the death toll stood at 4,098, the government data showed.

## 350 cops to participate in guard of honour quarantined

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, AUG. 9

Following the Covid-19 pandemic, the Delhi police has quarantined over 350 police personnel, who will be part of the guard of honour at Red Fort on Independence Day, as a precautionary measure.

According to a senior police official, these personnel of the force of all ranks — from constable to deputy commissioner of police — have been quarantined at a newly built police colony in Delhi Cantonment.

Special commissioner of (Armed

Police) Robin Hibu, who is in charge of the arrangements, said the 350 personnel are doing well and none of them have any Covid-19 symptoms.

"All personnel, who are currently in quarantine at the police colony here for over a week now, have been provided with all facilities and are strictly following social distancing norms. After their parade rehearsals, they immediately sanitise themselves. All precautions are being taken," said a senior police official. More than 2,500 Delhi

police personnel have been infected with Covid-19 so far.

## **Noida's Covid** tally nears 6,000, total tally at 5,945

Noida, Aug. 9: Uttar Pradesh's Gautam Buddh Nagar on Sunday recorded 77 new Covid cases, pushing the district's tally to 5,945, official data showed. The number of active cases in the district stood at 929, with 85 more patients getting discharged since Saturday, according to the data released by the UP health department.

So far, 4,973 people have recovered from Covid in Gautam Buddh Nagar, the second highest in the state after Lucknow (6,531), it showed.

The district has recorded 43 deaths linked to coronavirus till now and the mortality rate among positive cases stands at 0.72 per cent, according to official statistics.

The recovery rate of patients improved slightly to 83.65 per cent from 83.29 per cent on Saturday.

Gautam Buddh Nagar stands 12th on the list of districts in the state in terms of active cases.

The maximum active cases are in Lucknow (6,082), followed by

Kanpur Nagar (4,840), Allahabad (1,995), Bareilly (1,763), Gorakhpur (1,539), Jaunpur (1,188), Aligarh (1,247), Ghaziabad (1,035), Azamgarh (1,004) and Ballia (996), according to the data.

There are 47,890 active cases across Uttar cases Pradesh. So far, 72,650 patients have recovered across the state, the data showed.

## **NGT directs DDA to file response** to plea alleging pollution in lake

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, AUG. 9

Mr Rai said.

National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) to file a response to a plea alleging that a lake in East Delhi is being polluted by operation of boat services

A bench headed by NGT chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel also noted the submission that concretisation around trees is taking place in violation of its orders.

"Let DDA file its response within one month, failing which coercive measures under Section 25 of the National Green Tribunal Act, 2010, read with Section 51 of CPC may be the only option left with the tribunal. The response be filed by e-mail," the bench

According to the applicant, he made a representation to the authorities but the same has not been acted upon.

The Delhi Tourism and T r a n s p o r t a t i o nDevelopment Corporation (DTTDC) told the bench that no pollution is being caused in operating boats on the lake. With regard to the issue of concretisation of the trees, action is to be taken by DDA, the tribunal noted.

The tribunal's order came on a plea filed by city resident R.P. Singhal alleging that Sanjay Lake Park near Mayur Vihar is being polluted by ingress of sewage in the water ELECTRIC VEHICLE POLICY

## EV makers want exclusion of lithium scooters

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, AUG. 9

Electric vehicle manufacturers have hailed the new electric vehicle policy of the Delhi government and hope it will look into exclusion of e-scooters with speed of upto 25 Kms per hour from the incentive scheme.

As per the policy, only electric two wheelers with minimum top speed of 40 Km per hour will be eligile for incentives.

Sohinder Gill, director general of the Society of Manufacturers of Electric Vehicles (SMEV), said the electric vehicle(EV) policy of the Delhi government extensively covers key measures required by the industry to move in the

right direction. However a small miss**SOHINDER GILL**, director general of the Society of Manufacturers of Electric Vehicles (SMEV), said the electric vehicle(EV) policy of the

Delhi government extensively covers key measures required by the industry to move in the ing point in the policy is

that it does not support the lithium battery escooters with speeds upto 25km per hour that are particluarly popular with Delhites because of their attractive prices and extremely low running costs," Mr Gill said. With a bit of support of

the Delhi government the adoption of such e scootwould have grown multifold, he said hoping the government would

some amendments in the The EV policy of the Delhi government aims to

replace two wheelers in the standard category that have bulk users, to cut pollution level, said Jasmine Shah, vice chairman of Delhi Dialogue and development Commission who has been closely associated with shaping of the pol-

"Resources of a government are limited and need to be spent judiciously and as such the EV policy incentivises those regular two wheeler users who replace their vehicles with cleaner alternatives and thus help reduce air pollution," he said.

The EV policy launched by chief minister Arvind Kejriwal earlier this week,

cles account for 25 percent of the total new vehicle registrations in the city by 2024.The policy states that two-thirds of new vehicle

registrations in Delhi comprise wheelers with the most popular segments being motorcycles between 110 and 125 cc and scooters between 90 and 125 cc. "Any attempt at electrifi-

cation of Delhi's vehicle fleet needs to address these segments to achieve significant reduction in air pollution," says the EV policy.

The demand generation incentives under the policy, for electric two wheelers will be based on battery capacity (energy content measured in kWh) used in vehicles.

SHORT TAKES

## Man killed, 7 hurt

in wall collapse

Pune: A man was killed on Sunday when the wall of his flat collapsed after liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) leaking from a cylinder in his neigh-bour's house exploded in Pimpri Chinchwad township in Maharashtra's Pune district, the police said. Seven persons from both the families were injured in the inci-

dent which occurred in morning, an official said, adding that the LPG cylinder remained intact. Prima facie, the blast occurred after a woman switched on an electric switch in her house located in a housing society in Dighi area, he said. Police suspect the gas was leaking

from the cylinder over night. The blast took place in the flat belonging to Surwade family, but a person from Temkar family, residing in the adjoining apartment, died after the common wall collapsed. — PTI

### **Sanjay Dutt doing** fine, says hospital

Mumbai: Bollywood actor Sanjay Dutt, who on Saturday was admitted to Mumbai's Lilavati hospital after complaining of breathlessness, is doing good and is showing no other symptoms, hospital authorities said. As per the doctor's statement, his health condition is stable and is maintaining normal oxygen saturation. The doctor added that the actor might be staying in the hospital premises a day more and will be kept under observation. The 61-year-old actor has now been shifted from ICU to the normal ward and is expected to be discharged soon.

### **Female doc hangs** self in C'garh dist

Ambikapur: A 38-year-old doctor allegedly committed suicide in her home in Chhattisgarh's Ambikapur district, police said on Sunday. Dr Khushbu Singh was was found hanging from the ceiling of a room in her house this morning, a Gandhinagar police station official said. "Singh, who was staying at her parents' home with her five-year-old son, went to sleep after having dinner on Saturday night. Her son found her hanging in the morning after which he called his grandmother who was asleep in another room. She was taken to Ambikapur Medical College hospital where she was declared dead on arrival," he said. No suicide note has been found from the spot. She was posted at a health centre in Bariyo village in neighbouring Balrampur district," the official added.

### **Modern libraries**

in Haryana villages Chandigarh: Haryana deputy

chief minister Dushyant Chautala on Sunday said the Haryana government will set up modern libraries for students in rural areas if panchavats provide some land for the purpose. He said these libraries will be fully equipped and help youths in villages to prepare for competitive exams. Chautala. who also holds the panchayat portfolio, in a statement said that he has set a target of opening modern libraries in every village. He called upon all village panchayats to give a room or two or some space in their villages for setting up libraries. "The state government will build a modern library at its own expense. The students in the rural areas can immensely benefit from these libraries, he said. Chautala said he had also pushed the idea when he was a MP between 2014 and 2019. — PTI

## 4G restoration to be delayed as new L-G will review issue

High speed Internet has been suspended for more than a year

AGE CORRESPONDENT

Restoration of 4G Internet services in Jammu and Kashmir could be delayed further with appointment of new lieutenant-governor Manoj Sinha as sources claim he is expected to review the entire issue in detail again. High speed internet services in Valley have been suspended for more than a year now immediately after Article 370 was abrogated.

Suspension of high speed 4G internet services in the Valley has remained a highly contentious issues as there have been increasing demands from various

Don's aide

killed in

Lucknow

encounter

**Lucknow, Aug. 9:** An aide of don-turned-

Ansari who was accused

in the 2005 killing of BJP

leader Krishnanand Rai

was gunned down by the

Uttar Pradesh Police's

Special Task Force here

on Sunday morning, officials said.

Rakesh Pandey alias

Hanuman Pandey was

shot dead in Sarojini Nagar area of the state

capital, they said.
"The encounter of the criminal carrying a

reward of ₹50,000 on his

head took place around

4.20 AM on Sunday in Sarojini Nagar police station area of Lucknow. He sustained injuries in

the encounter, and later

succumbed to his injuries," the STF said

in a statement issued here. Pandey was allegedly involved in the

killing of Rai, who was

an MLA from Mohammadabad in Uttar Pradesh. The legis-lator was killed on November 29, 2005. "The

cavalcade of BJP MLA

Krishnanand Rai was

fired upon by criminals

equipped with AK-47,

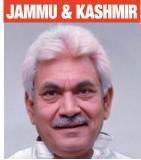
and more than 400 rounds were fired. Seven

Krishnanand Rai died.

Pandey was involved in

including

aide of politician



Manoj Sinha

quarters that these services be restored. However, the move has been strongly opposed by multiple security and intelligence agencies on the grounds that this would trigger a fresh round of terror

ing in the Supreme Court in view of some petitions being filed for restoring the services. Sources claimed that the

previous J&K L-G G.C. Murmu, who in a surprise move resigned and has now been appointed the CAG, was in favour on partial resumption of the 4G internet services. Mr Murmu, sources added, had interacted with a cross section of the people in the Valley during his tenure and got a sense that there was a strong sentiment for restoring internet services. Thus, this would remain a big chal-

activities and spreading lenge for the new Lt false propaganda. The Governor Manoj Sinha, matter has also been pendonic who is known for his common administrative accument. administrative acumen. However, it is believed that that no hasty decision is expected to be taken on the vexed issue and that the people of the Valley would have to wait for a

longer time for this. "We feel the new Lt Governor will hold fresh talks with stakeholder, including security and intelligence agencies, on this contentious issue and then reach a view before taking into with the Union Home Ministry. But it is clear no hasty decisions would be taken," a senior home ministry official added.

## ■ Influential Naga bodies complain to PM

## 'Gov is hounding groups engaged in peace talks'

influential Naga civil society groups have complained to Prime Minister Narendra Modi against Nagaland Governor R.N. Ravi, alleging that he is functioning in an "autocratic" manner and without any regard for what has been achieved in 23 years of peace talks with insurgent group NSCN-

The Naga Hoho and the Naga Mothers' Association (NMA) have also alleged that Ravi, who is the Centre's interlocutor for the peace dialogue, has been "hound-ing" the same Naga groups with whom he is supposed to negotiate and conclude the peace talks, and claimed that he does not seem to have the time

w o m e n peace mak-

R.N. Ravi In a memorandum to the prime minister, the Naga Hoho said the Nagas have been observing that the governor "is functioning in an autocratic manner without any regard and respect for what has

been achieved so far".
"With the appointment of R N Ravi as the governor, it was hoped to expedite the peace process. Instead, he is breaking the hard-earned trust and faith of the people and rendering the 23 years of negotiation meaningless by smearing Naga history

groups with whom the government of India is engaged in a negotiation, it said. The Naga Hoho, which is the apex body of different Naga tribal communities, said it felt that "peaceful settlement cannot be achieved with an interlocutor without empathy and without understanding our people, our history and our aspiration." The organisation told the Prime Minister that it continues to trust his leadership. "With your personal and political commitment, we believe that the solution is not far

away" it said.
The NMA, in its memorandum, said Ravi was allegedly "threatening" and "hounding" different Naga groups.



crash at Kozhikode International Airport on Friday night, wails during his cremation

## PM: A&N Islands can become top tourist destination

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, AUG. 9

For a 'New India,' balanced development of each part of the country is required, said Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday during his interaction with the BJP workers of Andaman and Nicobar islands. Noting that the Andaman and Nicobar Islands "gave strength" to the Independence movement and the region is associated with freedom fighters -Subhash Chandra Bose and Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, the Prime Minister said that the region will witness many development projects and said the Andaman and Nicobar islands have potential of becoming one of the key centers of global maritime trade due to its strategic location. Interacting with the BJP workers a day ahead of inauguration of the sub-marine Optical Fibre Cable (OFC), connecting Chennai and Port Blair by him, Mr Modi said the nect the region with the world and also asked the BJP cadre to focus more on the cleanliness of the islands as the region has potential of becoming a major tourism destina-tion. BJP president J.P. Nadda was also present during the PM's interaction with the party workers through video confer-

OFC will virtually con-

while appreciating the Covid-19 relief works undertaken by the BJP workers, Mr Modi said the "seva and samarpan(service and dedication)" should continue and karyakarta should see to it that he can help as

many people as he can.

Mr Modi said Andaman
and Nicobar islands have
been chosen for the expansion of high impact projects and can also play an important role in Atmanirbhar Bharat Mission as the region has great potential in seafood, organic products and coconut-based prod-

### **Cong launches** 'Rozghar do' campaign, **slams Centre**

AGE CORRESPONDENT

Minister Narena.

Modi, the Congress on launched Targeting Prime 'Rozgar Do' programme. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi also accused the Narendra Modi govern-ment of failing to meet its promise of jobs for two crore people every year, and then enacting policies that "destroyed India's economic structure" and left crores without jobs. In a 90-second video posted to his Twitter account, Mr Gandhi launched the "Rozgar Do (provide employment)" campaign and urged young people without jobs to raise their voices, speak out and "awaken the government from its slumber".

He said, Narendra became Prime Minister, he promised the youth of this country that he would give employment to two crore people every year. He sold them a very big dream.The truth is 14 crore people have been made jobless."

## **Maha: Wallet lost in local** train found after 14 yrs

Mumbai. Aug. 9: A man. who lost his wallet containing ₹900 in a local train here in 2006, was in for a pleasant suryears and returned him part of the amount.

this incident," the STF lost his wallet while Pandey was a sharpshooter of mafia dons Ansari and Munna Bajrangi, it said. Around 12 cases were against Pandey in different disofficial said on Sunday. tricts of Uttar Pradesh.

Police have recovered two pistols, ammunition and two mobile phones from the spot.

registered

The STF claimed Pandey was among the most reliable men of Ansari, who is the sit- $\begin{array}{ccc} \operatorname{ting} & \operatorname{BSP} & \operatorname{MLA} & \operatorname{from} \\ \operatorname{Mau.} & & -PTI \end{array}$ 

Padalkar, a resident of Panvel in neighbouring Navi Mumbai township, recently went to the GRP office at Vashi prise when the police informed him that they where he was given part of the money that was have found it after 14 in the wallet

"My wallet at that time contained ₹900, includ-Hemant Padalkar had ing a ₹500 note which was later demonetised travelling in a (in 2016). The Vashi GRP Chhatrapati Shivaji returned ₹300 to me. Maharaj Terminus-Panvel local train in stamp paper work and 2006, a Govrnment said the remaining ₹500 Railway Police (GRP) would be returned after would be returned after exchanging In April this year, he received a call from GRP, Vashi, informing scrapped currency note with a new one,' Padalkar told PTI.

He said when he went to the GRP office, there were many who had come to collect their stolen money, amounting into several thousands in demonetised ing of restrictions, currency,

# **YOU CAN BE...**



## dead after inhaling

that his wallet was

However, he could not

then go to collect his

wallet because of the

coronavirus-enforced

lockdown. After the eas-

Deoghar, Aug. 9: Six persons died on Sunday after inhaling poisonous gas in a septic tank in Jharkhand's Deoghar district, a senior police officer said.

Two labourers Govind Manjhi (53) and Tilu Murmu (24) — got into the septic tank of a private home to clean it in the morning in Devipur village of the

of police Piyush Pandey said. When they failed to house owner return, Rajesh Barnwal's two brothers - Brajesh (54) and Mithilesh (43) entered the tank to check on the labourers, the SP said.

As all four of them failed to respond, one by one Manjhi's two sons, both in their 20s, went in, he said. None of them

Pandey stated. "Local villagers broke open the tank and found all six lying unconscious. They were taken to a nearby hospital, where doctors declared them 'brought dead'. All of them died inhaling toxic he said. The bodies will he handed over to the family members after

fumes inside the tank,' post-mortem, he added.

Big B shares 'work anxieties' over Covid

Mumbai, Aug. 9: Megastar Amitabh Bachchan has expressed "anxieties" over being able to find work opportunities amid the coronavirus pandemic as a septuagenarian.

His comments came after Bombay high court on Friday quashed the provi-sions of the two circulars issued by the Maharashtra government that barred TV and film artistes above 65 years of age from resuming shootings and related work during the coronavirus lockdown, terming them

'discriminatory' who returned home after



Amitabh Bachchan

testing negative for Covid-19 last week, said it may be "packers" for the senior workforce in the film industry as legal procedures take time to come to effect.

"There are of course many other anxieties that trouble The Bollywood veteran, the mind. Government authorities have stipulated

that those at 65 age and and OTT programmes, such above cannot go out to work... For people like me, my profession and my 78 yrs, it's packers then!" Bachchan, 78, wrote on his

blog on Saturday. The court was hearing two petitions, one filed by 70year-old actor Pramod Pandey, and another by the Indian Motion Pictures Producers Association

(IMPPA).

According to government him. resolutions, while the state "Ar was permitting a gradual resumption of some activities, including shootings and pre and post-production work of films, television

cast and crew members who were above 65 years of age would not be permitted to report to work at sets or stu-

The regulations barred such artistes from remaining present in studios or on shoot sets.

In the meanwhile, the senior actor also asked his fans and followers to suggest alternate career options for

"Are there any alternate work jobs for me, that the Ef could in their kindness suggest, in case everything goes down in the Courts?

## AS WE FIGHT CRIME & TERRORISM

**JOIN THE DELHI POLICE "EYES & EARS" SCHEME** CALL 1090 TO REPORT ANYTHING SUSPICIOUS

YOUR IDENTITY WILL BE KEPT SECRET

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

FOR IMMEDIATE POLICE HELP CALL 112

TO SHARE INFORMATION CALL 1090

### SHORT TAKES

### **Fake Naxals held** for extortion bid

Bhubaneswar: The Odisha police on Sunday arrested three youth for allegedly trying to extort money from a farmer while impersonating Maoists in Javapatna area in

Kalahandi district. Farmer Tulasiram Nayak from Pujhariguda village under Jayapatna police limits got a call a few days asking him to pay ₹10 lakh. The caller while identifying himself as a Maoist further told Tulasiram to fulfill the demand at the earliest, failing which he will face dire consequences. Following this, Tulasiram lodged a complaint at the Jayapatna police station. According to

lakh and convinced him to take ₹70,000 initially. **UP bus driver dies** 

a plan laid out by the police,

Tulasiram called up the per-

son who was demanding ₹10

in road accident Noida: The driver of a staterun bus was killed on Sunday after the vehicle collided with a truck on a highway in **Uttar Pradesh's Greater** Noida, the police said. The roadways bus had around 25 passengers on board when the incident took place around 4 am in the Badalpur police station area, they said. "The bus had started from Farrukhabad and was bound for Delhi but met with an accident with a truck. The bus driver suffered severe injuries while some passengers had minor injuries," an official said. "Bus driver Omkar Singh, a native of Farrukhabad, was taken to a nearby hospital but he succumbed to injuries," the policeman said. — PTI

### **UPSC topper Malik** meets Haryana CM

Chandigarh: UPSC civil services exam topper Pradeep Singh Malik on Sunday met Haryana chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar, who congratulated him and said that his achievement would inspire other youth of the country. Mr Malik along with his father Sukhbir Singh met Khattar in New Delhi, a state government release said. The UPSC topper, who hails from Sonipat in Haryana, met the chief minister to seek his blessings, it said. Mr Khattar told Mr Malik that his achievement would inspire other youths of the state and the country, and presented him with a shawl. He also honoured Sukhbir Singh and said that the credit for Mr Malik's success also

## 500 kg of poppy

goes to his father, the

seized in Haryana Chandigarh: The Harvana police on Sunday seized 500 kg of poppy husk and nearly 65 kg of "ganja" (cannabis) from Jind and Palwal districts respectively and arrested four persons under the NDPS Act. While the poppy husk consignment was seized from near a canal between Ujhana and Neppewala villages in Jind districts, the ganja was seized in two different raids in Palwal district. The poppy husk consignment was seized by a team of crime investigating agency of Harvana Police on a tip-off that a huge consignment of some narcotic has been kept near the canal for being sent to Punjab. On receiving the information, the police team rushed to the spot and seized the poppy husk consignment and arrested a man, identified as Mohit, a Haryana police spokesperson said. Initial investigations revealed that the accused had kept the drug consignment near village

### **J&K: 3 arrested**

Ujhana, where in-laws of his

for killing woman

sister reside. - PTI

Jammu: Three people have been arrested for killing a 70-year-old woman in Udhampur district of Jammu and Kashmir, the police said on Sunday. Vakeelan Devi, a resident of Rasli-Thakrai village, was found dead near Rasli Gaderan in the Basantgarh area on August 2, a police official said. During the course of investigation, police detained some suspected persons for questioning and later, three of them — Des Raj, Kaka Ram and Sanjay Kumar — confessed that they had committed the crime, the official said. He said the inquest proceeding was converted into a criminal case. — PTI

## **Sushant case: ED grills Rhea brother for 18 hrs**

'Responses by brother-sister duo largely incomplete'

AGE CORRESPONDENT

Enforcement Directorate (ED) questioned Showik
Chakraborty, brother of actor Rhea Chakraborty, for about 18 hours and has summoned the actress again for questioning on Monday in connection with the money laundering case linked to the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput. Following questioning of Rhea on Friday, the agency is probing the trail of ₹2.5 crore worth fixed deposit of the late actor, to ascertain if it

diverted Chakraborty. The interrogation has hinted towards the possibility of the money having been allegedly siphoned off with the help of her chartered accountant (CA).

The ED officials said the responses given by the brother sister duo was largely incomplete that gave rise to many questions. The team questioning them has hence sought for another round questioning Chakraborty has again been summoned on Monday. Her father has also been called to record his statement. The officials said they may grill Showik again for questioning citing his inability to answer several basic

MISSION

GAGANYAAN

IAF officer

completes

for Phase 1

BHUBANESWAR, AUG. 9

Odisha-born Indian Air

Force (IAF) Wing Commander Nikhil Rath

along with his other co-pilots has completed the

first phase training for

Nikhil who hails from

Bolangir is among the

four selected for Indian

manned mission to

"Gaganyaan" mission is billed for 2022 and

Nikhil is among the four

selected astronauts from

India who have complet-

ed their training at

Russia on crew actions

in the event of an abnor-

mal descent module

According to a statement by Russian Space

Corporation,

Roscosmos, Nikhil along

with his co-pilots have

completed training on

crew actions in all weather and all terrain

modules. "They were

trained on landing on

wooded and marshy

(February), on the water

surface (June) and in the

steppe in summer (July)

in complete adherence

to the Covid safety proto-

cols," Roscosmos said.

in

manned

"Gaganyaan".

Organisations

Gagarin

Training

landing.

country's first

mission

Kesearch

Cosmonaut

Centre in

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO

training

**Raut: Politicisation of case** a conspiracy against Maha

**SONU SHRIVASTAVA** 

Shiv Sena spokesperson and executive editor of the party mouthpiece Saamana Sanjay Raut on Sunday claimed "pressure tactics" were being used in the case of actor Sushant Singh Rajput's death and the issue was being politicised as part of a conspiracy against Maharashtra. It is wrong to see the unfortunate suicide of the actor from a political angle, the leader penned in his weekly column "Rokhthok" in the

'If one wants to indulge in politicisation and pressure tactics, anything can happen in our country. It looks like the script of Sushant's case was already written. Whatever has happened behind the curtains is a conspiracy against Maharashtra," Mr Raut said.

The Centre's "interference" in Rajput's case was an insult of the Mumbai Police, he claimed, adding the CBI may be a Central agency, but it independent impartial".

questions pertaining to expenditure.

The probe is underway and Chakraborty will be questioned again. Financial details are being scrutinized," said ED officials.

The agency has already questioned Chakraborty's CA Ritesh Shah in connection with the incident and are verifying the books of accounts to ascertain the money flow. The ED is investigating the alleged laundering of the money

to the tune of ₹15 cr that were allegedly swindled from Rajput's bank account as per the allegations of his father.

On Saturday Chakraborty told the ED that the 500 sqft residential property in Khar (east) was bought using her money and that she had not taken any mone-tary help from Rajput. The 34-year-old actor was found hanging from the ceiling in the bedroom of his Bandra apartment

many as 10 patients died at a star hotel converted to a treatment

coronavirus centre here on Sunday panic-stricken when inmates tried to flee a fire suspected to have been caused by a short circuit,

Amaravati, Aug. 9: As

the government said.
Director General of
Disaster Response and Fire Services Department Md Ahsan Raza said one COVID-19 patient was charred to death while nine died of asphyxiation caused by the smoke.

women among the 10 victims. **ANDHRA PRADESH** 

Thirty two people have been rescued by Andhra Pradesh Disaster and Fire Response Services Department.

A hotel staffer broke his back and was hospitalised after he jumped out a window on the first floor in a bid to save himself after the fire broke out.

A criminal case under Sections 304 (2) and 308 of Indian Penal Code has been registered against the managements of hotel Palace

Ramesh Hospitals even as the state government constituted two committees to conduct a detailed probe into the exact cause of the fire and other lapses that led to the tragedy.

The state government said negligence on the part of the Ramesh Hospitals management in running the Covid Care Centre in the hotel since mid-July, was prima facie established.

"Swarna Palace is a major fire hazard. It did not even have proper exit points and that made the

ficult and we had to use ladders to bring down the trapped people," Raza told

Chief minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy announced an ex gratia payment of ₹50 lakh each to the next of kin of the 10 victims

Prime Minister Narendra Modi called Reddy over phone and enquired about the inci-

Reddy told Modi that a private hospital had taken the star hotel on lease to treat Covid-19 patients.



A view of flooded district hospital after monsoon rainfall in Jabalpur on Sunday.

## Removal of Shivaji statue in Belgaum triggers row

AGE CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, AUG. 9

removal Shivaji Chhatrapati Maharaj's statue district Karnataka has triggered an uproar in Maharashtra, with the Shiv Sena and NCP condemning the BJP-led Yediyurappa government for the incident. The saffron party however has alleged that local Congress MLAresponsible for

removal of the statue. Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut said that the Maharashtra government should take opposition parties into confidence on this issue. All parties should come together to dent under the leadership of BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis. We are ready to protest in Belgaum, but are the opposition willing

to do so, he asked. "Few days back, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had mentioned the name of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj while performing the bhoomi pujan of Ram Mandir in Ayodhya. But his own party's government has removed Maharaj's statue in Karnataka," he added.

NCP state chief Jayant Patil too slammed the BJP saying its affection for Chhatrapati Shivaji is limited only to votes. Instead they always have hatred towards Maharaj,

Taking cognisance of the incident, the Shiv Sena-led Maha Vikas Aghadi government has shot off a letter to Karnataka Chief Minister Yediyurappa, seeking reinstatement of the statthe legendary Maratha warrior king. State minister Eknath Shinde, who is also the minister in-charge for coordination

Maharashtra-Karnataka border issue, had said that statue had been installed with the permission of the gram panchayat in Mangutti village, but administration removed it deliberately.

Shiv Sena workers also held protests across the state over the issue in

## 11 members of Pak Hindu family found dead in Raj

Participants perform to mark the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples at Baganpara in Birbhum,

10 killed in fire at Covid care centre

**Jodhpur, Aug. 9:** Eleven members of a family of Pakistan Hindu migrants were found dead at a farm in Rajasthan's Jodhpur district on Sunday morn-ing, the police said.

A member of the family, however, was found alive outside the hut they lived at Lodta village of the Dechu area, over 100 km away from Jodhpur city, an officer said.

"But he claimed to have no idea about the incident, which believed to have happened in the night," said superintenpolice (rural) Rahul Barĥat.

'We are yet to ascertain the cause and means of death. They appeared to have committed suicide consuming some chemical in the night," Mr Barhat said.

He said there was a smell of some chemical in the hut, suggesting they

consumed something. The family belonging to the Bhil community had come to India from Pakistan's Sindh province in 2015 on a long-term visa. They had been living at the Lodta village farm, which they had hired for farming, for the past six months. There was neither any injury mark on any of the bodies nor any evidences of any foul play, the SP said. "But we have roped in a forensic team and a dog squad before arriving at any conclusion," he said. Preliminary investigation indicated that there

was some dispute in the

▶ THE POLICE said that there was a smell of some chemical in the hut. There was neither any injury mark on any of the bodies nor any evidences of any foul play.

family over some issue. "Once we interrogate the survivor, we would be in a position to find out what had led to this inci-

dent," he said. According to a police officer, the victims lived under threat from the family of their daughterin-law, the wife of Kewal Ram, the surviving member of the victim family.

She has been living with her family in Jodhpur for the past some time due to some dispute, said the police officer, citing this as a possible trigger for

their suicide.
According Kewal Ram (35), they had dinner between 9 pm and 10 pm on Saturday night and went to sleep.

"I went to guard our crop from animals and slept there," he said.

In the morning, when he came back, he found all his family members dead. "I then called my nephew who rushed to the spot with some other persons and informed the police," said Kewal Ram,

about the incident. The bodies have been sent for autopsy in Jodhpur and a medical board has been constituted to find out the cause of their death.

Council of Nagaland

under the leadership of T.

Muivah, Isak Swu and S.S. Khaplang. The group later

expressing his ignorance

## 'Was asked if I was Indian as I don't **know Hindi**<sup>3</sup>

CISF orders probe

Chennai/New Delhi, Aug. 9: DMK MP Kanimozhi on Sunday alleged that a CISF offi-cial asked her if "she was an Indian' could not speak Hindi, while the paramilitary force ordered an inquiry asserting that it is not its policy to insist upon any

particular language. The Dravidian party member of Parliament thanked the CISF for immediate response and assurance to take action.

'Today at the airport a CISF officer asked me if 'I am an Indian' when I asked her to speak to me in Tamil or English as I did not know Hindi," Ms Kanimozhi, who is also the DMK's women's wing secretary, said on her official Twitter account.

According to party sources, the incident occurred in Chennai when the MP was at the airport to board a Delhi flight in the afternoon.

She has reached the national capital and she will be there for a few more days and has official engagements.

"I would like to know from when being Indian is equal to knowing Hindi," she tweeted with the hashtag "hindiimpo-

sition".

The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) sought details from her soon after.

"Warm greetings from @CISFHQrs. We sincerely acknowledge your unpleasant experience. Kindly DM journey details; name of airport, location, date, and time of the incident for appropriate action in the matter," the CISF tweet-

Soon, the CISF said it has "ordered an Enquiry into the matter. It is not the policy of CISF to insist upon any particular language'

The MP replied saying Thank you for the immediate response and assurance to action". Ms Kanimozhi is the

member of Parliament from Thoothukkudi in Tamil Nadu.

### PMO's deadline for Naga pact **FIR against Cong leader** for tampering Modi's pic ■ Continued from Page 1

**RABINDRA NATH** CHOUDHURY BHOPAL, AUG. 9

winter

The police in Indore on Sunday lodged an FIR against former minister and MP Congress unit working president Jitu Patwari for portraying Prime Minister Narendra Modi in poor light by posting his morphed photo-

graph in social media and making "objectionable" remarks against him. The police booked the Congress leader, said to

be close to ex-AICC presi-

dent Rahul Gandhi, under Sections 188 (dis-

obedience to official

order) and 464 (making a

false document) of IPC

following a complaint lodged by Indore Lok

Sabha member Shankar

Lalwani and several other BJP leaders.

"The Congress MLA posted a photo of the PM taken when the latter was performing bhoomi pujan for construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya on August 5. Jitu Patwari tampered with the photo and made undignified remarks against the PM which caused damage to his dignity and hurt sentiments of people", the complaint said. Mr Patwari has since

deleted the controversial tweet posted on Saturday. The Congress leader, however, said he had not made any derogatory or offensive remarks against the PM. He wanted to highlight the Centre's failures on economic and employment fronts.

an accord will be signed after the surrender of the inventory of weapons by the cadres, the sources said the Union home ministry, in consultation with the interlocutor, was also preparing a rehabilitation package for the Naga

rebels.

Clarifying that the Covid-19 situation had delayed the peace process, the sources said the government had already rejected the demand for a separate flag and constitution for Nagaland, but the NSCN (I-M) was still insisting on discussing these issues. Saying these two contentious issues may be left for negotiations between the state and Central governments after the signing of the accord, the sources said a vested interest group was

working overtime to derail the peace process. "As Naga peace talks started in 1997, a vested interest group is already developed and active. They know they can't derail the peace process so they have been working hard to ensure that the status quo maintained," sources said, while reject-

ing media reports making claims such as a change of interlocutor to the NSCN (I-M) refusing to join the talks, etc.

About the talks being held in New Delhi instead of Kohima, the sources said the decision to hold the talks in New Delhi was taken by Mr Ravi given the health issues of 86year-old NSCN (I-M) general secretary Th Muivah, who is now under treatment in New Delhi.

The security sources

said the interlocutor and NSCN (I-M) negotiators or two rounds of meetings before finalisation of the modalities of the Naga pact for which the NSCN (I-M), the working committee of Naga National Political Groups and other stakeholders will be the signatories

Naga insurgency has been one of India's oldest conflicts. Right from Independence, the Naga groups have asserted their distinct identity and sought to break away from the Indian Union. Led by Angami Zipo Phizo, the movement for secession took a violent turn in the 1950s.

When some elements signed a peace accord with the government, a more radical outfit the

În 1997, New Delhi began engaging closely with the NSCN, led by Isak and Muivah (I-M). A ceasefire was declared. Multiple It is significant that the

split.

added.

Nationalist

rounds of talks were held. Violence dipped — even though the insurgents maintained a parallel government in the state. And in August 2015, a framework agreement was signed that has not only managed to neutralise the Naga extremists but also shattered the backbone of the insurgency across the entire Northeast. A distinct evolution in the Naga position is visible, the security sources



## THE ASIAN AGE

**10 AUGUST 2020** 

## Kozhikode highlights air safety imperative

Tt would be some time before we get to know what led to crashlanding of the Air India Express flight at Kozhikode airport on Friday, which claimed the life of 18 passengers including the pilot and the co-pilot.

The Director-General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has already initiated an investigation into the accident in which the aircraft, part of the Vande Bharat Mission, carrying 191 passengers including the crew skidded off the runway and ran into a ditch. Inclement weather and poor visibility coupled with human error have been cited as early reasons but the whole truth will come out only when the investigation is completed. It should also reveal if the systems were made to make amends for the errors that caused a similar accident in Mangaluru airport 10 years ago.

An aircraft is a magnificent engineering product which has evolved over a century and air travel is the safest mode of transport if we consider the number of people using it. This is basically because it is system-depen-dent, and recalibrates itself if something goes wrong anywhere in the system. It is imperative on the part of the regulators and the authorities to pick lessons from the Kozhikode incident

While awaiting the investigation report, we must comment on the grace, presence of mind, valour and selflessness, which were on display at Kozhikode immediately after the mishap

and improve it further. While awaiting the investigation report, we must comment on the grace, presence of mind, valour and selflessness, which were on display at Kozhikode immediately after the mishap. The local residents of the nearby Kondotty town in Malappuram district rushed to the accident site, launched the rescue operations in no time and, with the help of the rescue team from the airport, completed the job in about less than two hours. They evacuated all the passengers and rushed them to the nearby hospitals despite knowing the fact that they are oper-

ating in a Covid containment zone and that many of the passengers could have been infected with the coronavirus. The timely intervention has considerably reduced the casualty, according to doctors. The social media was awash with photographs of youngsters rushing to hospitals and queuing up to donate blood for people of whom they have not heard before

That, however, should bring certain other disturbing facts to the attention of the government. The DGCA had banned the operation of wide-bodied aircraft under Code E from May 2015 after an inspection by the regulator flagged safety concerns and later in 2018 allowed the same. The aircraft that met with the accident does not belong to that class but experts have already called for a reassessment of the safety standards. The tabletop airport, which is traditionally considered accident prone, needs expansion of its runway and the proposal to acquire about 100 acres for the project has been hanging fire for long. The Airports Authority of India, which runs the airport, and the government of Kerala must act in tandem, discuss it with the people and their representatives and complete the project after meeting their demands at the earliest so that all types of aircraft can have safe landing there.

## Setback for Tamils, Muslims

The overwhelming victory of Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) in the August 5 elections to the island nation's Parliament is a triumph of Sinhala Buddhist majoritarianism and a consolidation of power by the Rajapaksa family. It just follows a popular political trend across the globe, wherein people with power and privilege hunger for more power and more privilege and hand over governments on a platter to politicians whom they believe would do that for them.

In Sri Lanka, the Sinhalese perhaps chose the Rajapaksa family because they were enamored by the way prominent brothers, Mahinda and Gotabaya, ruthlessly quelled the LTTE in 2009. Or do the people believe that as a large family of rulers —another brother Basil and Nirmal, son of Mahinda, included — the Rajapaksas would do a better job in showing

minorities their place? Whatever it is, political trends that lead to the concentration of power in the hands of a family yanks democracy off the feet of nations. With such a brute majority in Parliament, the brothers are only likely to make sweeping constitutional changes to enhance the authority of the President and to continue ruling the country for a longer time. There are also indications shion the government on the lines of a military Already Gotabaya, who came in as President in November, has appointed many serving and former military officers to key bureaucratic posts.

Since Gotabaya stormed into government by stoking ethnic Sinhala nationalism and SLPP has now romped home exemplifying such a majoritarian agenda, the ruling family would have no qualms about subjugating the minorities, Muslims and Tamils in particular. And when the minorities look up to the government for an assurance to realise their legitimate aspirations, the pardoning of military officers charged with war crimes during the end of the civil war in 2009 by the Rajapaksas can be least

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## Will 'Ram Rajya' lead to a more tolerant India?



Pavan K. Varma **Chanakya's View** 

eligious disputes, involving historical memory, and deeply sive recent communal clashes, are not easy to resolve. But the manner in which India got over the Ram Mandir versus the Babri Masjid dispute must be a unique template for the rest of the world. When the talks failed, the matter was left to the Supreme Court. The judgment, which finally came in November 2019, was a remarkable compromise. It condemned the demolition of the Babri Masjid on December 6, 1992 and asked for all those responsible for this act to be prosecuted. The Ram Mandir Trust was awarded the disputed land for the building of the new temple. Simultaneously, country's highest court also ordered that five acres of land should be the construction of a mosque. In a country where some 80 per cent of the population is Hindu, Shri Ram will

fought legal *title* suit! There were some commentators in the media who proclaimed that August 5, 2020, the date of the shilanyas of the temple, marked the death of secularism in India. Frankly, I consider all such remarks ludicrous. Does secularism banish religious faith and worship in India? On the contrary, the Constitution guarantees both as part of our fundamental rights. If so, why should the building of a temple, pursuant to the decision of the highest court of the land, be the

finally get a temple in his name in his hometown

and at his birthplace

after a struggle for over a

century through a hard

harbinger of such unredeemed doom? The Muslim litigants, who were party to the judicial dispute, may not have been entirely happy about the final verdict, but they accepted it. The same "secular" commen-tariat has no objection if a mosque or a church is built. In the past, they had always maintained that a solution to the prolonged dispute should be found either through mutual accommodation or through a judicial ver-dict. Why then this pained hand wringing? In fact, it is my firm conviction that it is precise-ly this kind of reflex reaction that does the greatest disservice to the

cause of secularism in this country.

Perhaps the problem with the critics is the pageantry that marked the ceremony. But this was hardly a chance that the BJP-RSS was going to miss. A temple was 136 years of struggle. Its consecration had to be done in accordance with Hindu rituals, and the entire ceremony was bound to be telecast live. There was criticism too about Prime Minister Narendra Modi's participation in the function. But the precedent of our first President, Rajendra Prasad, inaugurating the

There were some commentators in the media who proclaimed that August 5, 2020, the date of the shilanyas of the temple, marked the death of secularism in India. Frankly, I consider all such remarks ludicrous.

Perhaps the problem with the critics is the pageantry that marked the ceremony. But this was hardly a chance that the **BJP-RSS** was going to miss. A temple was becoming a reality after 136 years of struggle.

restored Somnath tem-

ple in Gujarat, in spite of

the advice of then Prime

Minister

Jawaharlal

Nehru against it, is telling. Secularism in our country is not about the absolute separation of the State and faith. It is about the fundamental freedom of following one's faith, while respecting all other faiths. Babu Rajendra Prasad was one of the most prominent followers of Mahatma Gandhi. He was uncompromisingly secular. But his evocative defence of his decision was simply this: "I believe in my religion and cannot cut myself away from it." In other words, just like Gandhiji, he did not see a contradiction between being a practising Hindu and the imperative to respect all religions. Indeed, if one reads the debates of the Constituent Assembly on the question of secularism, this — and not the European construct of a complete separation between the State and religion — was the interpretation accepted by the vast majority of its members.

This being said, what is important for the future is a closure to the kind of communal politics that we have recently seen Devotees of Shri Ram would do well to remember that he was "*marya*da purushottam", the very epitome of right conduct, the role model of correct behaviour. Shri Ram would never sanction irrational anger, unwarranted violence, or unnecessary vengeance, particularly

manas, there is a very significant line in the description of Ram Rajya: "sab nar karahin paraspar priti" (all human beings would harbour mutual affec-tion for each other). It is Shri Ram again who in Tulsidas' words — tells Bharat: "Par hith saras dharam nahin bhai, par peeda sam nahin athamai (there is no greater virtue than the welfare of others, and no greater sin than injury to others)." This did not make him a passive god. He fought hard against injustice and defeated Ravan. even in this form, he harboured no personal enmity, and remained the embodiment of the saumya rasa, eternally in equipoise and equilibrium, rational and restrained, and certainly not the kind of person who would approve tak-ing the law into one's

innocent. In fact, in Tulsidas's Ramcharit-

own hands. Thus, when Prime Minister Modi in his speech at the ceremony said that Ram stands for the unity of India, it must be assumed that what he meant was that Ram, as the embodiment justice and right conduct, must guide our actions in the future. ideologue Ram Madhav quotes Swami Chinmayananda to say that Ayodhya itsel stands for "ayuddha" itself (non-war or peace), which should peace forever among all communities. If the otherwise noble greeting of Jai Shri Ram has been weaponised by illiterate bigots, Prime Minister Modi's emphasis on Jai Siya Ram in Ayodhya on August 5 is a good sign. We must remain vigilant to ensure that such sentiments are, indeed, implemented in the future. Hinduism, and its intrin sic tolerance for all faiths, would want that to happen.

The writer, an author, is a former diplomat and in politics

### **DOCTORS DEPARTED**

The Covid-19 pandemic has taken a toll on the medical fraternity with 196 doctors, mostly general practitioners, perishing to the virus. Tamil Nadu led the list of fatalities with 43 deaths, followed by Maharashtra and Gujarat (23 each), Bihar (19), Karnataka (15), Andhra Pradesh and Delhi (12 each) in that order. Out of 196 doctors who died, 170 were above the age of 50. **General practitioners** made up 40 per cent of the deaths. The government would do well to recognise their extraordinary efforts by providing cash incentives.

N.J. Ravi Chander Bengaluru

### **SUICIDAL CONGRESS**

**CONFUSION** is worse than a wrong direction and at the moment the Congress seems to be mired in the first. It is at its wit's end figuring out how to posture as a pro-Hindu party. But it can't compete with the champion in the field. Will it now go around bandying about as badges of honour what it once took pains to hide, oppressing those who spoke up to the contrary, viz. its own moves that led to the fall of the mosque? jects itself aggressively as a party working for the poor and marginalised it will do itself a big favour. After all, now is the time to focus on jobs and food for all.

**Syed Abdul Monim** Navi Mumbai

### **PARTY PREFERENCES**

A SURVEY was conducted to gauge the popularity of the chief ministers of various states. Its findings revealed that the chief minister of the BJP-ruled Uttar Pradesh is the most popular chief minister. However, six others who follow him in descending order are all from non-BJP-ruled states. Can this be interpreted to infer that the respondents prefer non-saffron parties at the state level, but want the BJP at the helm?

Arun Malankar

₹500 for the best letter of the week goes to R. Narayanan (Aug. 8). Email: asianage.letters@gmail.com.



Singhal nephew at pujan venue; Covid reprieve for Gehlot govt?

hile most invitees seated in close proximity to Minister Narendra Modi around the havan kund at the ground breaking ceremony for the Ram Mandir at Ayodhya last week could be recognised, people were left guessing the identity of a couple who participated in the religious ceremony. It turned out the "unknown person" was Salil Singhal, a Udiapur-based businessman and the nephew of late Ashok Singhal, who was the international working president of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad for nearly two decades and a leading figure in the Ram Janmabhoomi movement. Salil Singhal's presence, along with his wife Madhu, led many to ask about denying the same courtesy to Janata Party leaders L.K. Advani and Murli Manohar Joshi who were also the architects of the movement which catapulted the saffron party to power. Party insiders pointed out it should be remembered that Ashok Singhal was the first leader from the Sangh to declare his support for Mr Modi's candidature as the BJP's prime

ministerial face. Speaking to the press at the 2013 Mahakumbh congregation in Allahabad, Mr Singhal had said that Mr Modi enjoyed the same popularity as Jawaharlal Nehru. In contrast to Mr Singhal, Mr Advani had resisted Mr Modi's move to the national political stage while Mr Joshi was also not known to be favourably disposed towards

fter Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra came out in support of the construction of a Ram Mandir at Ayodhya, party leaders went overboard in endorsing her stand. While most leaders put out similar tweets and statements, many party offices in the states and districts organised special prayer meetings while others even burst crackers to mark the occasion. However, this open display of religiosity at the party offices has not gone down well with a section of the Congress cadre. Questions are being raised in private conversations about organising pujas at party offices and whether similar celebrations will be held in the future to mark the festivals of other faiths. Most pertinently, it is being asked if any programme will be held when the construction of the mosque begins on the plot, which has been allotted to the Muslim community to compensate for giving up their claim on the disputed site of the Babri Masjid.

Hirst home minister Amit Shah tested positive for coronavirus. Petroleum minister Dharmendra Pradhan was next. Both are undergoing treatment at a private hospital in Gurugram. With the two leaders in quarantine, BJP insiders are wondering how their incarceration will affect the party's plans to topple the Ashok Gehlot government in Rajasthan. It is an acknowledged fact that it is Mr Shah who is planning and supervising the operation in the desert state while Mr Pradhan, who has now emerged as his chief lieutenant, executes the former party president's orders. So does this mean a reprieve for the Gehlot government? The more optimistic in the BJP express full faith in Mr Shah's capabilities while underlining that it is perhaps no coincidence that the two chief players are in a hospital which is in close proximity to

the resort where rebel Rajasthan Congress leaders are lodged.

Bihar's director general of police Gupteshwar Pandey, who has been cuttured. who has been extremely vocal about the ongoing investiga-tion into actor Sushant Singh Rajput's death, sounds more like a politician thán a high-ranking police officer. Like a politician he has been making all kinds of charges in public, acting as judge, jury and executioner. It must be recalled here that Mr Pandey nurses political ambitions and had even sought a ticket from the Bharatiya Janata Party but it never materialised. As inspector general of police, Muzaffarpur, Mr Pandey courted controversy when he was investigating an abduction case and was even examined by the Central Bureau of Investigation in connection with it. Mr Pandey took voluntary retirement from the service a few years ago but was subsequently reinstated by Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar, a decision which raised a lot of eyebrows. This bit of background is important to understand why Mr Pandey over-eager to please his

political bosses.

The recent decision of the textile ministry, headed by Smriti Irani, to disband the 70year-old All-India Handloom Board, set up by Pupul Jayakar, and the All-India Handicrafts Board, has virtually gone unnoticed. The two panels, comprising craftspersons and other experts, served as a valuable forum for the government to get inputs from people working in the field. The official explanation for scrapping these boards is that it is prompted by the government's vision of "minimum government, maximum governance". However, representatives of the sector and craftspersons, are convinced the decision flows from a belief that Irani's ministry does not need to listen to voices from the ground. They feel it is a deliberate attempt to deny an opportunity to those outside the system to interact with the government. Ms Irani is particularly prickly about working with anyone who has been even remotely associated with the Congress regime.

Anita Katyal is a Delhi-based

IN BRIEF

### **Hungary bus** crash: 1 dead

Budapest: One man died and three people, including a young child, were seriously injured when a tourist bus crashed into a ditch on the side of

a highway in Hungary, police and rescue officials said Sunday. The incident happened on the M5 highway in the city of Kiskunfelegyhaza, about 115 kilometres (71 miles) east of Budapest, the capital. Police said the vehicle was a Polish tourist bus. A spokesman for the National Rescue Service said a 35-year-old man died at the scene and 34 people were injured. Three people who suffered serious injuries, including a child about five years old. Two helicopters and 14 ambulances were taking the injured to hospitals. The bus was travelling toward Budapest and the crash hap-

### **Czech apartment** blaze kills 11

pened around 6:30 a.m.

Prague: At least 11 people have been killed and 10 others injured in an apartment building fire in the northeastern Czech Republic, officials said Saturday, with some suggesting that the fire could be arson. Police said the fire hit the 11th floor of the 13story building in the afterno-on in the town of Bohumin. Firefighters spokesman Lukas Popp told local media that six people, three adults and three children, were killed in

an 11th-floor apartment. The other five died after trying to escape from the building "in a panic" by jumping from the windows on the 12th floor, Interior Minister Jan Hamacek told Czech public radio. Ha-macek and the head of the regional government, Ivo Vondrak, suggested the fire was

likely intentionally set. Regional firefighter chief Vladimir VIcek said it was unusual how quickly the fire spread through the apartment.

### 30 perish in S. Korea floods

Seoul: Landslides and flooding triggered by days of heavy rain in South Korea have left at least 30 people dead and 12 missing, officials said Sunday, warning of more downpours. Torrential rain has wreaked havoc across the country since the beginning of the month, but nearly half of the deaths occurred in the past three days, according to the Ministry of the Interior and Safety. Since Friday more than 3,700 people have been displaced from their homes after flooding in the country's hardest-hit southern region. In all, nearly 6.000 people have been evacuated from their homes across the country this month, with about 4,600 of

them staying at temporary shelters. Among the victims was a man in his 80s who was found dead after he was buried in a landslide with his tractor. A 61-year-old man and a 59-year-old woman were killed after their home was swallowed by a landslide. Authorities have issued landslide warnings for 24 regions.

## 3 DAYS OF **RAIN KILLS 50 IN PAKISTAN**

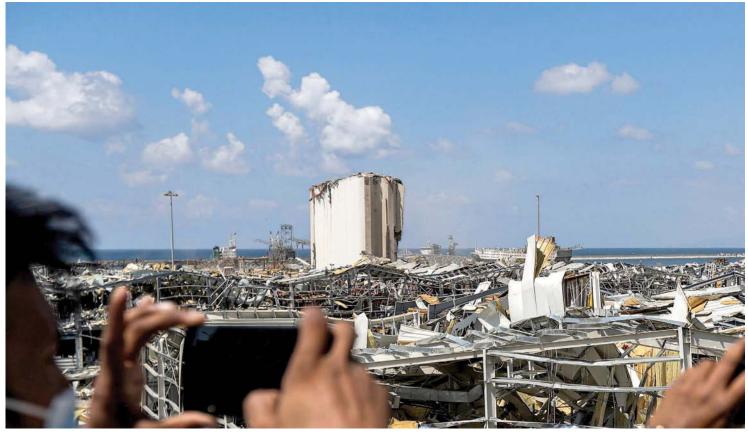
Karachi, Aug. 9: Three days of heavy monsoon rains triggering flash floods killed at least 50 people in various parts of Pakistan, as troops with boats rushed to a flood-affected district in the country's southern Sindh province Sunday to evacuate people to safer places.

Every year, many cities in Pakistan struggle to cope with the annual monsoon deluge, drawing criticism about poor planning. The monsoon season runs from July through September, during which swelling rivers cause damage to crops and infrastructure.

According to Pakistan's National Disaster Management Authority, 19 people were killed in rain-related incidents in northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, 12 in southern Sindh province, 8 in Punjab province and 10 in the country's scenic northern Gilgit Baltistan reg-

ion in the past three days. Rains also partially damaged about 100 homes and caused a breach in a main flooded canal, inundating villages in Sindh province. Troops used boats to rescue stranded people and move them to safer places.

It said a medical camp was also established and food was being provided to the rescued people. Heavy rains also lashed many districts in Baluchistan province, damaging homes. According to local media reports, at least eight people were killed in Baluchistan because of rains and flash flooding.



People take photos from atop a bridge overlooking the damaged port of Lebanon's capital Beirut and its grain silos on Sunday, in the aftermath of a colossal explosion that occurred Tuesday due to a huge pile of ammonium nitrate that had languished for years at a port warehouse. — Al

## Violence, chaos must not prevail in Lebanon: Macron

French Prez urges speedy global response after deadly Beirut port blast

**Paris, Aug. 9:** French President Emmanuel Macron on Sunday said violence and chaos must not prevail in Lebanon as he opened a UN-backed aid conference for the country rocked by angry protests over negligence blamed for the deadly Beirut port blast.

'It is up to the authorities of the country to act so that the country does not sink, and to respond to the aspirations that the Lebanese people are expressing right now, legitimately, in the streets of Beirut," Macron said.

"We must all work together to ensure that neither violence nor chaos prevails," he added. "It is the future of Lebanon that is at stake." Macron on Sunday called for speedy international backing for disaster-struck Lebanon and urged its leaders to prevent "chaos" as he opened an emergency aid conference following Beirut's deadly

Macron hosted US President Donald Trump and other world leaders for the virtual conference arum up aid for Lebanon, as the UN said some \$117 million will be needed over the next three months for the emergency response. "The objective today is to act quickly and effectively to coordinate our aid on the ground so that it goes as efficiently as possible to the Lebanese peo-ple," Macron told the conference also attended by

Lebanon information minister quits in first govt resignation Beirut, Aug. 9: Lebanon's • THE HEAD of Leban-Minister Hassan Diab's

minister Manal Abdel Samad on Sunday quit in the first government resignation since a deadly port blast killed more than 150 people and destroyed swathes of the capital. "After the enormous Beirut catastro-phe, I announce my resig-nation from government." nation from government, she said in a statement carried by local media, apologising to the Leban-

ese public for failing them. The head of Lebanon's Maronite church meanwhile called on the entire government to step down over the August 4 explosion, a blast widely seen as shocking proof of the rot at the core of the state apparatus. Lebanese protest-

Lebanon's President Michless. tor Mark Lowcock, representatives of the World Bank, the Red Cross, the IMF, the EU, the Arab League and several Middle

Eastern leaders. Macron was the first world leader to visit Beirut after Tuesday's devastating explosion which killed at least 158 people, wounded some 6,000 and left an

estimated 300,000 home-

on's Maronite church meanwhile called on the entire government to step down over the August 4 explosion. Lebanese protesters enraged by the blast vowed to rally again after a night of street clashes in which they stormed several ministries.

ers enraged by the blast vowed to rally again after a night of street clashes in which they stormed several ministries.

Maronite patriarch Beshara Rai joined the chorus of people pressing Prime

Lebanese people streets of Beirut. el Aoun, UN aid coordina- enraged by the official negligence blamed for the explosion have taken to the streets in anti-government protests that saw clashes with the army.

Macron said it was "up to the authorities of the country to act so that the country does not sink, and to respond to the aspirations that the Lebanese people are expressing right now, legitimately, in the

inept and corrupt. — AFP

cabinet to step down over

a blast he said could be

"described as a crime against humanity". "It is

not enough for a lawmaker

to resign here or a minis-

ter to resign there," Rai

said in a Sunday sermon.

"It is necessary, out of sensitivity to the feelings of the Lebanese and the

immense responsibility required, for the entire go-

vernment to resign, becau-

se it is incapable of moving the country forward."

for early parliamentary

polls — a long-standing demand of a protest move-

ment that began in Octob-

er, demanding the removal

of a political class deemed

Rai echoed calls by Diab

"We must all work together to ensure that neither violence nor chaos prevails," he added. "It is the future of Lebanon that is at stake." Macron also warned that "those who have an interest in this division and chaos, it is the powers that would somehow want to put the Lebanese people

at risk". He did not name

names.

-AFP

## **BLAST CRATER** 43 METRES DEEP, **SAYS OFFICIAL**

Beirut, Aug. 9: The huge chemical explosion that hit Beirut's port, devastating large parts of the Lebanese capital and claiming over 150 lives, left a 43metre (141 foot) deep crater, a security official said Sunday. The blast Tuesday, whi-

ch was felt across the county and as far as the island of Cyprus, was recorded by the sensors of the American Institute of Geophysics (USGS) as having the power of a magnitude 3.3 earthquake.

It was triggered by a fire in a port warehouse, where a huge shipment of hazardous ammonium nitra te, a chemical that can be used as a fertiliser or as an explosive, had languished for years, according to

authorities. The huge blast also wounded at least 6,000 people and displaced more than 300,000 from their destroyed or damaged homes.

The revelation that the chemicals had languished for years like a ticking time-bomb in the heart of the capital has served as shocking proof to many Lebanese of the rot at the core of the state appara-

## Germany troop pullout: Pompeo eyes east Europe

Washington, Aug. 9: As President Donald Trump orders US troops out of US troops out of US Trump orders US Trump order US Trump orde Germany and faces a tough re-election battle, his top diplomat, Mike Pompeo, is heading to friendly climes in Central and Eastern Europe.

Pompeo on Tuesday opens a five-day trip that will terminate in close ally Poland, which is eager to welcome some of the US troops leaving Germany to guard against historic adversary Russia. He will also travel to the Czech Republic, Slovenia and Austria where he is expected to press his campaign for nations to shun Huawei, the Chinese telecom giant considered a threat by Washington as it takes a lead in fifth-generation internet.

In Slovenia, where he will be the first US secretary of state to visit since 2001. Pompeo will on Thursday sign an agreement on 5G, officials said without previewing details. Pompeo's trip comes weeks after the Pentagon said the United States would bring home some 6,400 military personnel from Germany and shift nearly 5,600 more to other NATO allies, including Italy and Belgium. Trump has a tense relationship with German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who declined his invitation for a Group of Seven summit in Washington in the middle of the Coronavirus pandemic, and accuses Europe's largest economy of unfair trading practices.

"What is most significant about this trip is the places the secretary is not going to," said Ian Lesser, the Brussels-based vice president of the German Marshall Fund of the United States.

'If the secretary was going to address the core issues in transatlantic rela-

## **U.S. VISIT TO TAIWAN BEGINS**

**Taipei, Aug. 9:** A senior member of US President Donald Trump's administration landed in Taiwan Sunday for Washington's highest level visit since switching diplomatic recognition to China in 1979, a trip Beijing has condemned. During the three-day visit Health Secreta-ry Alex Azar will meet President Tsai Ing-wen, who advocates Taiwan being recognised as a sovereign nation and is loathed by China's leaders.

Tsai's office said the meeting would take place Monday morning. Azar is the most senior US cabinet member to visit Taiwan in decades and his visit comes as relations between the world's two biggest economic powers plunge to historic lows.

In recent days, Trump has ordered sweeping restrictions on popular Chinese apps TikTok and WeChat and the US Treasury Department slapped sanctions on Hong Kong's leader over a tough law that curbs dissent.

Washington has billed the Taiwan trip as an opportunity to learn from the island's fight against the Coronavirus. -AFF

tions at the moment, he would be making stops in Brussels, Paris and Berlin." Lesser said that the troop repositioning out of Germany was unlikely to be a major issue for US voters. "What does have some political resonance is how a senior American official is received ... he or she goes to Europe," -AFP

## Mahinda Rajapaksa sworn in Lanka PM

Mahinda Rajapaksa was sworn in as the prime minister for the fourth time Sunday after his party secured a landslide victory in parliamentary elections that cemented his family's hold on power. Rajapaksa took oath before his younger brother, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, at a prominent Buddhist temple on the outskirts of the capital Colombo. Mahinda Rajapaksa served as the island nation's president from 2005 to 2015 and is highly popular among the ethnic majority Sinhalese for ending the country's 25-year civil war against Tamil rebels in 2009.

Lanka's former President

He was first elected prime minister in 2004 and again appointed for brief periods in 2018 and 2019. Sri Lanka People's Front — the party led by the Rajapaksa brothers won 145 seats in the 225member Parliament in the election last Wednesday. Its main opponent

obtained only 54 seats. A party representing ethnic minority Tamils won 10 seats, and 16 others were split among 12 small parties. The victory gave the Rajapaksa brothers nearly the two-third majority of seats requir-



Gotabaya Rajapaksa (R) swears in elder brother Mahinda Rajapaksa (L) as Sri Lanka's new Prime Minister in Colombo on Sunday.

ed to make constitutional changes that could strengthen dynastic rule in the country. This time, five members of the Rajapaksa family have been elected as lawmakers — Rajapaksa, his son Namal, the eldest brother Chamal and his son Sashindra, and a nephew, Nipuna Ranawaka. The brothers need 150 seats to be able to change the constitution.

At least four small parties collaborate with the Rajapaksas' party, so they appear to have mustered that support. However, analysts say any attempt by Gotabaya Rajapaksa to push for changes that will strengthen presidential powers at the expense of the prime minister may trigger sibling rivalry.

### Mauritius containing oil spill in sea • THE BULK carrier **Port Louis, Aug. 9:** Police in Mauritius on Sunday prepared to board a grouand appeal for internaon's unspoiled lagoons, a Mauritius court to board tional help. MV Wakashio has been marine habitats and Attempts to stabilise the stricken vessel, which ran white-sand beaches, caus-

nded ship leaking tonnes of oil into its crystal-clear waters, as clean-up crews confronted a growing ecological disaster on the archipelago's pristine shores. The bulk carrier MV Wakashio has been seeping fuel into a protected marine park boasting unspoiled coral reefs, mangrove forests and endangered species, prompting Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth to declare an environmental emergency

aground on July 25 but only started leaking oil this week, and pump 4,000 tonnes of fuel from its hold have failed, and local authorities fear rough seas could further rupture the tanker.

Hundreds of volunteers, many smeared head-to-toe in black sludge, are mar-shalling along the coastline, stringing together miles of makeshift cordons in desperate attempt to seeping fuel into a protected marine park, boasting unspoiled coral reefs, mangrove forests and endangered species, prompting PM **Pravind Jugnauth to** 

declare an environmen-

tal emergency

hold back the oily tide. But already, thick muck has inundated the island natiing unprecedented damage to the fragile coastal ecosystem upon which Mauritius and its economy relies.

"People have realised that they need to take things into their hands. We are here to protect our fauna and flora," said Ashok Subron, an environmental activist at Mahebourg, one of the worst-hit areas. Police said Sunday they would execute a search warrant granted by

the Wakashio and seize items of interest, including the ship's log book and communication exchanges, as part of its investigation into the accident. The ship's captain, a 58-

vear-old Indian national. will accompany officers on the search, police officials said.

Twenty crew members evacuated safely from the Japanese-owned but Panamanian-flagged ship when it ran aground are under surveillance.

## HONOURING | DEAD | City mayor raises concern that nuclear countries had retreated from disarmament efforts Nagasaki urges nuke ban on 75th anniv of A-bombing

Japanese city of Nagasaki on Sunday marked its 75th anniversary of the US atomic bombing, with the mayor and dwindling survivors urging world leaders including their own to do more for a nuclear

weapons ban. At 11:02 a.m., the moment the B-29 bomber Bockscar dropped a 4.5-ton (10,000pound) plutonium bomb dubbed "Fat Man", Nag-asaki survivors and other participants stood in a minute of silence to honour more than 70,000 dead. The Aug. 9, 1945, bomb-

ing came three days after

its first atomic bomb on Hiroshima, the world's first ever nuclear attack that killed 140,000. On Aug. 15, Japan surrendered, ending World War II.

At the event at Nagasaki Peace Park, scaled down because of the Coronavirus pandemic, Mayor Tomihisa Taue read a peace decment efforts.

laration in which he raised concern that nuclear states had in recent years retreated from disarma-Instead, they are upgrading and miniaturising nuc-

lear weapons for easier

use, he said. Taue singled

increasing risks by scrapping the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty.

'As a result, the threat of nuclear weapons being used is increasingly becoming real," Taue said.
Noting that the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty entered into force 50 years ago, Taue urged the US and Russia to show a (asterisk)workable way(aster-isk) towards their nuclear disarmament at the NPT review process next year. He said that "the true horror of nuclear weapons has not yet been adequate-

ly conveyed to the world at

large" despite struggle and efforts by hibakusha, or atomic bombing survivors, to make Nagasaki the last place of the tragedy.

He also urged Japan's government and lawmakers to quickly sign the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

After taking part in the ceremony, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe criticised the treaty for not being realistic. None of the nuclear states has joined, and it is not widely supported even by non-nuclear states, he "The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was adopted without taking into consideration the reality of the harsh national security environment," Abe said at a news conference.

"I must say the treaty is different from Japan's position and approach" even though they share the same goal of abolishing nuclear weapons, he said. Abe

has repeatedly refused to sign the treaty. He reiterated that Japan's approach is not to take sides but to serve as a bridge between nuclear and non-nuclear states to encourage dialogue to achieve a total nuclear -AP



Japanese PM Shinzo Abe lays a wreath to mark the 75th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki, at the Nagasaki Peace Park on Sunday.

# E FINANCIAL

## Chronicle

MONDAY | 10 AUGUST 2020 | NEW DELHI

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	38,040.57	0.04
Nifty 50	1,1214	0.12
S&P 500*	3,351.28	0.09
Dollar (₹)	74.93	0.00
Pound Sterling (₹)	98.12	0.53
Euro (₹)	88.64	0.20
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	55,120▼725	1.30
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	44.40	0.00
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.886	0.025
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.566	0.00
* As of Friday/Saturday		

## FPIs invest over ₹7,800 crore in equities in Aug.

Overseas investors remained net buyers in Indian markets by investing a net Rs 8,327 crore in the first week of August. Foreign portfolio investors invested a net Rs 7.842 crore in equities and Rs 485 crore in the debt segment during Aug. 3-6, according to depositories data. FPIs have been net buyers in the past two months. They invested Rs 3,301 crore in July and Rs 24,053 crore in June on net basis.

## **Emission rules for** construction, agri machinery likely



The Centre said it has issued draft notification for separate emission norms for agriculture machinery and construction equipment vehicles. MoRTH has invited suggestions on a draft notification seeking to amend Central Motor Vehicles Rules 1989 to separate the emission norms for agricultural machinery aricultural tractors, power tillers and combined harvesters) and construction equipment vehicles, a release said.

### **Amazon Easy** stores get an upgrade

Online retailer Amazon launched an upgraded 'Amazon Easy' store format that integrates its multiple services through a single touchpoint. The format would offer a touchand-feel product experience through a physical product display, the firm said. Customers can also place an order on Amazon.in with assistance from the store staff and either pick up the order from the store or get it delivered at the doorstep.

## ₹68,000 cr loans released under discoms' package

As much as Rs 68,000 crore worth of loans under the Rs 90,000-crore liquidity package announced for the stressed power distribution utilities have been sanctioned so far. "Staterun non-banking finance firms REC and Power Finance Corporation have sanctioned loans worth about Rs 68,000 crore so far under the Rs 90,000 crore liquidity infusion package for discoms announced in May," a source said.

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## ■ Current price is lower than 1980 high

## **Gold has room to** go beyond \$2,800

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, AUG. 9

At \$2,070 an ounce, gold touched a new high last week and has moved up more than 30 per cent since the break of Covid-19 pandemic. However, when adjusted to inflation, the record price is lower than 1980 January as well as September 2011 record-high levels. This provides room for gold to move beyond \$2,800 per

"Adjusted for inflation, the gold price today is \$200 shy of the 2011 level and well below its January, 21, 1980 record high equiva-lent to approximately \$2,800 per ounce in today's money," says a World Gold

Council report.
Gold had hit a record high of \$850 an ounce in January 1980 as investors piled up bullion to beat high inflation due to strong oil prices, the Soviet Union intervention in Afghanistan and the impact of the Iranian revolution. If adjusted to inflation, this would have translated to \$2,800 per ounce in today's scenario. Similarly, in September 2011, gold had made a high of \$1,920 per ounce and if adjusted to inflation, it would have been close to

\$2,200 per ounce. Further, the report finds that the gold price had more than doubled from about \$900 per ounce in early 2008 to its high more than three years later in the aftermath of the global financial crisis. In con-



trast, it has increased by 30-34 per cent since the beginning of the Covid-19

The current price movement of gold has been driven by high levels of global uncertainty and very low interest rates. The Covid-19 pandemic is far from over and more importantly, its impact on the global economy is yet to be determined.

Central banks have aggressively cut interest rates, often in combination with quantitative easing and other non-traditional policy measures. Governments have also approved massive rescue packages to support their local economies. These initiatives have increased concerns that easy money, rather than fundamentals, is fuelling the stock market rally and all the extra money being pumped into the system may result in very high inflation or at the very least, currency

debasements. "The re-emergence of infections seen in Japan, Australia, South Korea and Vietnam and upturn

in infections seen in the US, Russia and India could trigger the reimplementation of lockdowns and containment measures. The more delayed the complete reversal of the great lockdown, the slower the economic recovery. With this background, it is hard to imagine a scenario where central banks around the world will change their accommodative stance any time soon," said Chirag Mehta, senior fund manager-alternative investments. Quantum

Mutual Fund. Further, despite record inflows into gold ETFs in 2020, gold remains an under-owned asset. The market share of Gold ETFs, compared to all ETF assets, jumped from 3 per cent to 8 per cent in the aftermath of the global financial crisis before dwindling to one per cent levels in the following years. The current figure stands at 3 per cent, indicating significant potential for Gold ETF asset expansion going forward,

## TikTok plans to sue Trump administration

BELINDA CAO & YUEQI YANG

TikTok plans to file a federal lawsuit as soon as Tuesday to challenge President Donald Trump's executive order banning the video-sharing service from the US as unconstitutional, National Public Radio reported.

The lawsuit will be filed in the US District Court for the Southern District California, where TikTok's American operations are based, NPR said, citing a person familiar with the matter whom it didn't identify. It will argue that the president's action unconstitutional

because it failed to give the company a chance to respond and that the US government's nationalsecurity justification for the order is baseless,

according the report.
Chinese-owned TikTok responded in a blog post on Friday it is "shocked" and will pursue all remedies available, including in US courts. A company spokesman reached by phone on Saturday decli-ned to comment on the NPR report and referred to the earlier blog post.

Trump signed executive orders on Thursday pro-hibiting US residents and companies from doing business with TikTok and Tencent Holdings' WeChat apps, effective in 45 days, citing the national-securi-ty risk of leaving Americans' personal data exposed. A 1977 law lets the US president declare a national emergency in response to an "unusual and extraordinary threat."

## from latest import ban

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, AUG. 9

Defence production relat-

ed stocks like Larsen &

Toubro, Bharat Forge and

defence PSUs such as

Bharat Electronics and

HAL would be in focus on

Monday as the govern-

ment has fast-tracked

indigenous production of

many items and plans to

phase out high levels of

import dependence over a period of time.

Military Affairs (DMA), Ministry of Defence (MoD) has prepared a list

of 101 items for which there would be an embar-

go on the import beyond

the timeline indicated

against them, said a

release on Sunday. "It is estimated that contracts worth almost Rs 4

lakh crore will be placed

upon the domestic indus-

try within the next five to

seven years. Of these, items worth almost Rs

1,30,000 crore each are

anticipated for the Army

and the Air Force while

items worth almost Rs

1,40,000 crore are antici-

pated by the Navy over the same period," the defence

Bharat Forge, Bharat Electronics, Larsen & Toubro, HAL, Cochin Shipyard, Garden Reach, BEML, Bharat Dynamics,

Mishra Dhatu Nigam and

BHEL may bag large con-

tracts with their past records in defence-related production, brokers said.

Defence production related stocks have rallied

post-Galwan Valley clash

The list of 101 embar-

goed items comprises not

ministry said.

on June 15.

The Department of

Defence stocks may gain

Defence production related stocks On the rise have rallied post-Galwan Valley clash Stock price on June 15-Company stock price Galwan Valley clash HAL 947.90 657.5 99.20 **Bharat Electronics** 70.9 **BHEL** 35.25 29.1 **BEML** 656.35 595.7 Mishra Dhatu Nigam 204.70 195 **Bharat Dynamics** 419.05 235.55 Cochin Shipyard 331.65 Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers 202.40 188.55

Bharat Forge Figures in ₹

Larsen & Toubro

Source: BSE, FC Research just simple parts but also some high technology crore, the release said.

915.70

408.00

weapon systems like artillery guns, assault rifles, corvettes, sonar systems, transport aircraft, light combat helicopters (LCHs), radars and many other items. The list also includes, wheeled armoured fight-

ing vehicles (AFVs) with indicative import embargo date of December 2021, of which the Army is expected to contract almost 200 at an approxi-mate cost of Rs 5,000 crore.

Similarly, the Navy is likely to place demands for submarines with indicative import embargo date of December 2021, of which it expects to contract about six at an approximate cost of Rs 42,000 crore. For the Air Force, it has been decided to enlist the light combat aircraft with an indicative embargo date of December 2020. Of these, 123 are anticipated at an approximate cost of over Rs 85.000

899.65

340.45

The embargo on imports is planned to be progresimplemented between 2020 and 2024. The aim behind promulgation of the list is to apprise the Indian defence industry about the anticipated requirements of the Armed Forces. More such equipment for import embargo would be identified in consultation with all stake-holders, the defence ministry said.

The recently published draft Defence Production and Export Promotion Policy, 2020 suggests a more bottom-up framework to empower system integrators achieve greater scale by expanding the role of the private sector, especially MSMEs. Key objectives include achieving Rs 1.75 lakh crore turnover, including Rs 35,000-crore exports; cutting defence imports; entry in the global defence exports value chain, among others.

## Oil giants cut value of assets by \$50 bn

**DAVID GAFFEN** 

The world's five largest oil companies collectively cut the value of their assets by nearly \$50 billion in the secona quarter, and slashed production rates as the coronavirus pandemic caused a drastic fall in fuel prices and demand.

The dramatic reductions in asset valuations and decline in output show the depth of the pain in the quarter. Fuel demand at one point was down by more than 30 per cent worldwide, and still remains below pre-pandemic levels.

Several executives said they took massive writedowns because they expect demand to remain impaired for several more quarters as people travel less and use less fuel due to the ongoing global pandemic that has killed more than 700,000 people.

Of those five companies, only Exxon Mobil did not book sizeable impairments. But an ongoing re-evaluation of its plans could lead to a "significant portion" of its assets being impaired, it reported, and signal the elimination of 20 per cent or 4.4 billion barrels of its oil and gas

By contrast, BP took a \$17 billion hit. It said it plans coming years around renewables and less on oil and natural gas. Weak demand means oil

producers must revisit business plans, said Lee Maginniss, managing director at consultants Alarez & Marsal. He said the goal should be to pump only what generates cash excess of overhead costs. "It's low-cost production mode through the end of 2021 for sure, and to 2022 to the extent there are new development plans being contemplated," Maginniss

London-based BP has previously said it plans to cut its overall output by roughly 1 million barrels oil equivalent (boepd) by the end of 2030 from its current 3.6 million boepd.

Of the five, Exxon is the largest producer, with daily output of 3.64 million boepd, but its production dropped 408,000 boepd between the first and sec-ond quarters. The five majors, which include Corp, Dutch Shell and Total SA, also cut capital expenditures by a combined \$25 billion between the quar-

- Reuters

## ONGC pares debt by 35%, but low oil & gas prices a concern

owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) has cut its debt by more than one-third but faces an uphill challenge to meeting planned expenditure during the current fiscal due to oil and gas prices falling below suboptimal levels, according to company officials and regulatory filings.

ONGC's outstanding debt of Rs 21,593 crore as on March 31, 2019 has come down to Rs 13,949 crore as on March 31, 2020. as it used revenue from better operations to retire some of the borrowings, according to the company's regulatory filings.
Out of this debt, long-

term borrowings account for Rs 2,245 crore which are due for maturity in December 2029.

The company had cash and cash equivalent (including other bank balances) of Rs 968 crore as on March 31, 2020, up from a record low of Rs 504 crore a year back. Standalone debt-equity

ratio at the end of March 31, 2020 is only 0.07, which is considered comfortable. Company officials explained that ONGC has been working on bringing

operational efficiencies and financial discipline and used surplus revenues to repay debt.

'While we ended the 2019-20 fiscal year with a comfortable financial position, we face an uphill challenge during the current 2020-21 financial year. The pandemic has played havoc on oil prices and government mandated gas price is way below cost of production," a sen-

ior official said. ONGC has planned a capital expenditure of over Rs 26,000 crore and meeting that target with the current oil and gas prices will be a challenge, he said.

Another official said the company had taken an impairment loss of Rs 4,899 crore in Q4 FY'20 to

factor in estimated future crude oil and natural gas

prices. However, the company believes that oil and gas prices will recover in future and then this impairment loss shall be reversed as and when prices rise, he said. ONGC once was India's most profitable company with a cash balance of over Rs 10,000 crore. But

the fortunes reversed after the company bought the government's 51.11 per cent stake in oil marketing company Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) and the Gujarat government's GSPC in a KGbasin gas block.

It funded the Rs 36,915 crore acquisition of 51.11 per cent equity shares in HPCL through internal and balance Rs 24,881 crore from borrowed money from commercial banks.

The funding requirenent of Rs 7,560 crore for Gujarat State Petroleum Corporation's KG block acquisition was met by borrowing against term deposits.

Its cash and balances dipped to touch a record low of Rs 504 crore in March 2019, down from Rs 1.013 crore in March 2018 and Rs 9,511 crore in March 2017 and Rs 9,957 in March 2016.

"We live in an era of suboptimal oil prices and gov-ernment mandated natural gas prices that are way the cost. The answer to such a scenario is to optimise cost and bring in operational efficiencies," an official said.

He said the company has sufficient lines of credit/ short term fund facilities with banks amounting to Rs 7,800 crore for meeting the working capital or deficit requirements. Further, the company has an overall limit of Rs 10,000 crore for raising funds through commercial paper.

## Shelf-life of skills now only 2-3 years, says **Nasscom chief**



U. B. Pravin Rao

Bengaluru, Aug. Nasscom chairman U. B. Pravin Rao on Sunday said the shelflife of skills is now only two to three years, as he called for continuous, lifelong learning.

As corporates are reinventing themselves, individuals also need to reinvent themselves to stay relevant, said the

COO of Infosys.
"Shelf-life of skills is becoming short, two-three years", said Rao, who was addressing the online graduation ceremony hosted by upGrad and IIIT-B.

"People need to unlearn, learn new stuff need and therefore commit to lifelong learning. This is critical to stay relevant and employable", Rao said. — *PTI* 

## Thailand bets on pvt medical marijuana to lift economy

**NATNICHA CHUWIRUCH** 

Thailand's ailing economy, particularly its tourism and agriculture sectors, poised to get a boost from new rules that ease the private cultivation and sale of medical marijuana.

The cabinet amended the Narcotics Act on Aug. 4, pending parliament's approval, to allow private medical operators - a category including some traditional medicine practitioners and farmers - to grow and trade the crop including for both export and import. The move expands a cornerstone policy of deputy prime minister and minister Anutin Charnvirakul, who bet that

the controlled legalisation

of marijuana would boost the wellness, travel and agriculture sectors.

The latest plan will lift limits imposed when the country in 2018 became the first in Southeast Asia to legalise medicinal use of the herb. It also follows the opening in January of a medical-marijuana clinic in the health ministry facilities that offer free medicine to its patients. This does not include the 147 authorised clinics in the country that are currently able to pre-

"Thailand is already a tourist destination for many foreigners, and mariiuana will be another attraction for the country and for medical tourists,' Marut Jirasrattasiri, director-general of



Department Traditional and Alternative Medicine, said in an interview. Private medical practitioners with licences will gain the right to "grow, produce and export marijuana," he said, adding that Thai farmers will gain "more options for income." Priority will be given to Thai investors, Marut said.

"We want to use Thai

money for now, especially

collaboration between the government and communities to enhance knowledge, research and production, Marut said. "We don't want foreigners to come in and invest, then reap all the ben-

agriculture and The tourism sectors are crucial to the local economy. About a third of Thais make their living from rice alone, according to the Thai Rice

Exporters Association. Meanwhile, the wellness tourism sector generated domestic expenditures of \$12 billion in 2017, more than the combined amounts in Indonesia and Malaysia, according a report by the Global Wellness Institute.

Thailand's economy is likely to contract 8.5 per cent in 2020 amid the global coronavirus pandemic, the biggest decline projected in Asia.

"This will allow more patients to have access to medical marijuana for their ailments and to increase awareness of medical marijuana in Thailand," Traisuree Taisaranakul, a juana government spokeswoman, said in a statement.

cultivation Marijuana

and dispensing is currently done solely by government agencies or closely regulated organisations. The plant remains a category-five drug, meaning recreational use is forbidden. Illegal possession could trigger a 10vear prison sentence and trafficking" is a crime pun-

ment or the death penalty. "In the next stages, both Thais and foreigners will have the opportunity to be treated with medical marijuana, but only after the Covid-19 pandemic has passed and inter-travel restrictions lifted," Marut said. "Marijuana has always been Thailand's crop, and all the foreign countries love it.'

— Bloomberg

### **BARCLAYS PROBED** BY WATCHDOG FOR **MONITORING STAFF**

**EDUARD GISMATULLIN** 

Barclays Plc is being investigated by the Information Commissioner's Office, a privacy watchdog, on allegations it spied on its workers through a computer monitoring software, the *Telegraph* reported. It said Barclays faces a maximum fine of 865 million pounds (\$1.1 billion) if it's found to have

broken data privacy laws. The software allowed managers to measure the length of time employees were away from their desks or how long they took to finish tasks, the paper said. —Bloomberg SHORT TAKES

### **Domestic cricket** likely from Nov.

New Delhi: The BCCI is mulling November 19 as tentative date for start of domestic season with Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 tournament but Indian players in various IPL teams won't be able to play first few rounds due to quarantine protocols in

place. The delay in the beginning of the domestic season due to Covid-19 pandemic means that only Mushtaq Ali trophy and Ranji Trophy (December 13-March 10) comprising of 245 games (across the formats with 38 teams) will be played. There will be no Vijay Hazare Trophy, Duleep Trophy or Challenger Series this year and as of now there is no provision for Irani Cup also. "This is a tentative list that

has been prepared and it has gone for approval of president Sourav Ganguly and secretary Jay Shah," a BCCI official said. While this is a draft schedule it is being asked how the Indian players, who will return from IPL, will play since they will have to be in a 14-day quarantine as per government rules.

### **Ex-Bagan captain** Manitombi dead

Kolkata: Former India defender

and Mohun Bagan captain Manitombi Singh died at the age of 39 at his native village near Imphal in Manipur on Sunday, club sources said. Manitombi was suffering from prolonged illness and breathed his last in the early hours of Sunday

He is survived by his wife and an eight-year-old son. "Mohun Bagan family is deeply saddened by the untimely demise of former club captain Manitombi Singh. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family during this difficult time. Rest in peace, Manitombi Singh," the club posted on its Twitter handle.

Manitombi was a key member of the Stephen Constantine-coached India Under-23 side that lifted the LG Cup in 2003 by defeating Vietnam 3-2 in Ho Chi Minh City.

It was India's first international triumph since their victory at an eight-nation tournament in Singapore in 1971. Manitombi also represented India in the 2002 Busan Asian Games. - PTI

### **Johnson leads** at PGA tourney

San Francisco: Dustin Johnson supplied the birdies, eight of them at the PGA Championship. the most he has ever made in his 157 rounds of major championship golf for a 5-under 65 and a one-shot lead. Brooks Koepka supplied the

needle on Saturday. Koepka recovered from three straight bogeys to salvage a 69 and stay within two shots of a leaderboard more crowded than any of San Francisco's congested highways.

At stake is a chance to become only the seventh player to win the same major three straight times. He surveyed the cast of contenders, and focused on the guy at the top The final round at Harding

Park figures to be wide open, just like it was on a Saturday so wild that eight players had at least a share of the lead during the third round.

Johnson lost his yardage book and still found his way through an enormous crowd of contenders. — AFP

## **DONCIC HELPS MAVERICKS BEAT BUCKS**

Lake Buena Vista, USA: Luka Doncic scored 36 points in his NBA-leading 17th triple-double and the Dallas Mavericks scored the last seven points of regulation to force overtime, going on to a 136-132 win over the Milwaukee Bucks on Saturday. Milwaukee star Giannis Antetokounmpo had 34 points 13 rebounds and five blocks before fouling out in the final seconds on the day the reigning MVP was named a finalist for the award along with LeBron James and James Harden. Doncic's final assist was a between-the-legs pass to Maxi Kleber for a three-point play and a 133-128 lead. — AP

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# EYES ON ICC CHAIR

## Nomination process for top post on agenda

Dubai, Aug. 9: Finalising the nomination process to elect Shashank Manohar's successor as the next independent chairman of the world cricket body is the sole agenda for the ICC Board, which will meet virtually on Monday.

It is expected that the

entire process irrespective of whether it's an election or unanimous selection will be over by four weeks.

"The meeting on Monday only has nomination process in the agenda. Normally, it is a two week window that is provided for filing nominations," a senior board member said on the condition of anonymity.
Usually in ICC, a two-

third majority is required but there could be a few board members who would want it to be a case of simple majority among

The 17 board members of ICC comprise of 12 Test playing nations, three associate Scotland (Malaysia, Singapore), chairman (in this case interim) and independent director (Indra Nooyi of Pepsico). ICC CEO Manu Sawhney

but without voting right. A candidate can be nominated by a past or present director of ICC but it has to be seconded mandatorily by two current directors. Only then one can enter the election fray.

is also a part of ICC Board

There have been discussions on whether the a former director nominating a an incumbent should remain valid or not.

As far as the candidates are concerned, there are few names, including that of current interim chairman from Singapore Imran Khawaja, are doing



## Vivo pullout no big deal: Dada

**Delhi, Aug. 9:** India's cricket chief Sourav Ganguly says the Indian Premier League's decision to suspend a lucrative contract with its main sponsor, the Chinese phone maker Vivo, following a deadly border clash between the two nations is

"just a blip".

The IPL last week suspended the agreement with Vivo, which signed a five-year contract in 2017 worth more than \$330 million to sponsor the world's richest cricket tourney.

"I wouldn't call it a financial crisis. It is just a little bit of a blip," said Ganguly, the head of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).

"BCCI, it's a very strong foundation — the game, the players, the administrators in the past have made this game so strong that BCCI is able to handle all these blips," he said at an online conference on Saturday.

You keep your other options open. It is like Plan A and Plan B," the BCCI president added. The 2020 IPL tournament is due to start in the United Arab Emirates next month.

Vivo said the decision was mutually agreed. The IPL and BCCI have tie-ups with companies including Paytm, Swiggy, Dream11 and Byju, which all have Chinese invest-

According to reports, the BCCI was in talks with Indian companies over sponsorship deals but was expected to make less

than the \$60 million it would have received from

Each of the eight IPL teams stands to lose nearly \$4 million from the lost sponsorship, a team said The star-studded IPL Twenty20 league is a huge revenue earner for BCCI and is estimated to gener-

ate more than \$11 billion for the Indian economy. The tournament normally starts in March, but was repeatedly postponed this year because of the

pandemic.

### SILVERSTONE | GRAND PRIX

## Verstappen steals victory in Brit F1

**Silverstone, Aug. 9:** Max Verstappen delivered Red Bull's first victory at Silverstone since 2012 on Sunday when he made the most of a superior strategy in sizzling conditions to beat both Mercedes and claim victory in the 70th Anniversary Grand Prix.

It was the Dutchman's first victory of the season and the ninth of his career and the first time a race had been won by a driver who did not start on pole position in seven races since last year's Mexican Grand Prix.

Verstappen owed his victory to a team decision to start the race on hard compound tyres while his main rivals all launched from the grid on mediums, the two Mercedes men struggling to manage tyre-wear throughout the race.

During the race, Red Bull asked him to ease off, but he replied saying "I don't want to drive like a grandma" before the team relent-

Verstappen won by 11.326 seconds ahead of championship leader and six-time champion Lewis Hamilton Max Verstappen went past the Mercedes duo of **Lewis Hamilton and** Valettri Bottas to win the 70th Anniversary **Grand Prix at** Silverstone race track on Sunday.

passed Mercedes teammate Valtteri Bottas in the closing stages. The

Finn finished third. "I didn't see that coming, 'but after the first stint it seemed we were really good on tyres. I didn't have any tyre issues at all — a great day for us," said Verstappen.

Hamilton said: "That was a massive challenge, but congratulations to Red Bull. It was definitely unexpected to have the blistering (on tyres) as hard core as that."

Bottas, who started from pole, said: "Very frustrating for me, to start from pole and finish third. It's not ideal and I think that as a team we were sleeping."

## **BUTTLER & WOAKES SEE**

Manchester, Aug. 9: Jos Buttler and Chris Woakes led a remarkable comeback for England in a three-wicket

victory over Pakistan in the first test on Saturday. The pair went on the counter-attack at the fall of the fifth wicket in England's second innings and shared a sixth-wicket stand of 139 on day 4 at Old Trafford. No fans were present for the exciting finale due to the coronavirus pandemic restrictions. Buttler was out for 75 while Woakes hit the winning

runs and was undefeated on 84 as England finished on

277-7 for its 10th highest successful test run chase. Leg-spinner Yasir Shah (4-99) had put Pakistan in pole position with two wickets as the hosts got off to a shaky start in their second innings. -AFP Brief scores: Pakistan 326 & 169 (Y. Shah 33, A. Shafiq 29, S. Broad 3/37, lost to England 219 & 277/7 in 82.1 ov (J. Buttler 75, C. Woakes 84\*, J. Root 42, Y. Shah 2/74).

## **PIRLO NAMED MANAGER OF JUVENTUS**

Milan, Aug. 9: Former Italy and Juventus star Andrea Pirlo was appointed the Italian champions new coach, just hours after Maurizio Sarri's sacking with the club promising a "new chapter in world football".

Juventus after just one season, a day after the Italian giants crashed out of the Champions League in the last 16 to French club Lyon.

The 41-year-old Pirlo, with no previous top-level coaching experience, recently took over the Juventus U23 side and arrives on a two-year con-

'The choice is based on the belief that Pirlo has what it takes to lead from his debut on the bench, an expert and talented squad to pursue new successes,' Juventus said.

"Today, begins a new chapter of his career in the world of football: from Maestro to Mister," the



Barcelona's Lionel Messi (centre) vies for the ball with Napoli's Mario Rui (second from left) during their UEFA Champions League Round of 16 second leg match at the Camp Nou stadium in Barcelona on Sunday. Barcelona won 3-0.

## Messi rises and shines

**Barcelona, Aug. 9:** Just when it looked like Messi had nowhere to go, Argentine great bamboozled half of Napoli's team before scoring from an exquisite solo effort that helped Barcelona reach the Champions League quarterfinals

netted

Portugal. Messi Barcelona's second goal in the 3-1 victory that

Napoli on a 4-2 aggregate score on Saturday. Messi's goal in the 23rd minute was arguably the pick of the 31 he has scored this season in all

competitions.

Napoli appeared to have him in check when Messi received the ball all alone outside the right corner of the area. Messi, however, dipped his head and took on the well-placed defense. He kept control sent the Spanish side past of the ball despite being

knocked over while going past three Napoli players. Meanwhile, Lewandowski twice and set up two more goals as Bayern beat Chelsea 4-1 on Saturday for a 7-1 win on aggregate in Munich to book a ticket to Lisbon.

Bayern has won 18 straight competitive games going back to February and hasn't lost since December. — Agencies

## **UNITED, INTER BRACE FOR EUROPA TIES**

Paris, Aug. 9: Manchester United, Inter Milan and Sevilla headline a quintet iormer cnampions travelling to Germany for a remodelled eight-team straight knockout tournament that will crown the winner of a Europa League campaign heavily disrupted

Coronavirus pandemic. All games from the quarterfinals onwards in this season's competition will be played behind closed doors as one-off ties across four venues.

"There are rules and regulations on the bubble that's going to travel. We've got to stick together, stay together in and around the hotel and the training ground," United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer said. — AFP LIVE ON TV

Europa League quarterfinals: Manchester United vs Copenhagen on Sony Ten 2; Inter Milan vs Leverkusen on Sony Ten 1. Both matches from 12.30 am (Tuesday)

# Root praises Jos, Chris for show

ioited his hat Jos Buttler after his beleaguered teammate battled concerns over his father's health and fear of losing his place in the side to engineer a dramatic triumph in the first Test against Pakistan here. After his vital 75-run

knock in a partnership of 139 with Chris Woakes that rescued England from 117 for five to register a threewicket victory, Buttler avoided any discussion on his father Johnny, who had spent the previous evening in hospital. "It says a huge amount

about him as a person to carry that and be able to either use it, or park it only he will know which way he did that and to play in that manner was exceptional. To have that external pressure as well, I'm chuffed to bits with him." Root said. It was a welcome knock for Buttler who had been struggling with the bat.

**Manchester, Aug. 9:** Root was also full of England captain Joe Root praise for Woakes.

You watch him play and know he's more than capable of three or four more Test hundreds. His game is there. He's got all the attributes, he was clear how he wanted to play Yasir Shah and managed the seamers.

### STOKES SET TO MISS **REST OF THE SERIES**

England star Ben Stokes will miss the concluding two Tests against Pakistan for family reasons, the England and Wales Cricket Board announced Sunday.

Stokes's father Ged was admitted to hospital in Johannesburg two days before Christmas last year with a serious illness while following his progress with the England cricket team during their

tour of South Africa. Ged, a former Kiwi rugby league international, underwent three operations and spent 37 days in

## Dire need to keep age fraud under check



Hemant Kenkre

**Silly Point** 

the lovely game of cricket has had it's issues over a period of time. Fudging age, particularly in the Asian subcontinent, has been a primary one which has not got the necessary treatment it deserves from Boards that govern the game in countries therein. The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) announced an amnesty scheme for young cricketers to own up any 'fudging' they may have committed if they want to play age-group cricket at a

The malaise of tamper-

ing with age has been going on for years in India and many 'illegals' have gone scot free, playing with cricketers much younger to them.

They have taken advantage of having strength over talent to bulldoze their way in school and age-group games creating a playing field that was completely lop sided, favouring teams that fielded older boys.

BCCI's edict of offering amnesty is welcome in the sense it will now ensure parity in age-group tournaments where offenders who continue to play ille-

that they will not be allowed to play in any agegroup tournaments, local and national, effectively taking away the best of the formative years of their careers. Being ineligible to play

for two seasons is a harsh punishment for young-sters and the BCCI has (over the past few years) been docking the guilty for meddling with age. Last year saw them, and domestic associations, punish more than 200 cricketers including one who had represented India Under-19 in the victorious 2018 World Cup.

Tinkering with age is an old issue that has plagued Indian cricket over the years. As a 16-year old boy, playing the Cooch Behar Trophy, which was an inter-state schools tourna-

gally will face a two-year ment in those days, I was ban. The ban will ensure shocked to see sweets being distributed by the captain of another state school team to celebrate the birth of his son. The incident that happened 47 years ago still rankles in my mind.

Most school cricketers in Mumbai (then Bombay) were aware that they had to compete with 'almost adults' who were masquerading as kids. While cases, in those

days, happened they were not as rampant as what we have been seeing recently. Elder, ineligible, players get more opportunities to represent state age-group teams irrespective of real skills, leaving genuine cricketers in the lurch. Not being in the state squads eventually forces talented youngsters give up the game with parents insisting on spending time on

the children education. The biggest problem faced by genuine coaches is to persuade parents to let their talented children continue to play the game. Reputed coach. Dinesh Lad, who nurtured young talent like Rohit Sharma, Shardul Thakur and his son Siddesh said that the biggest challenge in his 25years of coaching at the school level comes from

convincing parents. "I always tell parents that talented youngsters should continue to play at the Under-14 and Under-16 levels to develop their skills for the future and not worry about state team selections. Real talent like Sachin Tendulkar and Rohit Sharma will always find their way irrespective of the inequality," he con-

then has this malaise been allow to take

rampant proportions over the years? The answer lies in career prospects that cricket offers. Earlier it was jobs that talented cricketers ensured stability, now parents look at the prospect of a much bigger and better opportunity of their wards likely to be picked for the Indian Premier League (IPL) and get them set for life. Today, playing in the IPL is a more immediate goal set for youngsters than playing for the state or the country, unlike in

the past.

BCCI's amnesty scheme is a fabulous move, one that will give errant youngsters an opportunity to get back into the scheme of things and not put obstacles for their immediate future. If one takes a holistic view of the age tampering issue the primary blame lies with

indecorous coaches who get the youngsters (and their gullible parents) to agree to fake certificates that fuddle the age of the

cricketer. The unequal contests eventually lead to ruin with this form of shortterm cheating tearing into the fabric of the game. Along with the Board of Ccontrol for Cricket in India, many state associations have started to focus on this corruption which is as bad, if not worse, than match fixing and

throwing the game. Hopefully, the amnesty scheme will deter youngsters from taking such illegal shortcuts. To ensure a level playing field, the state associations must also censure errant coaches (the main culprits) with life time bans if any of their wards are found

guilty in the future.