



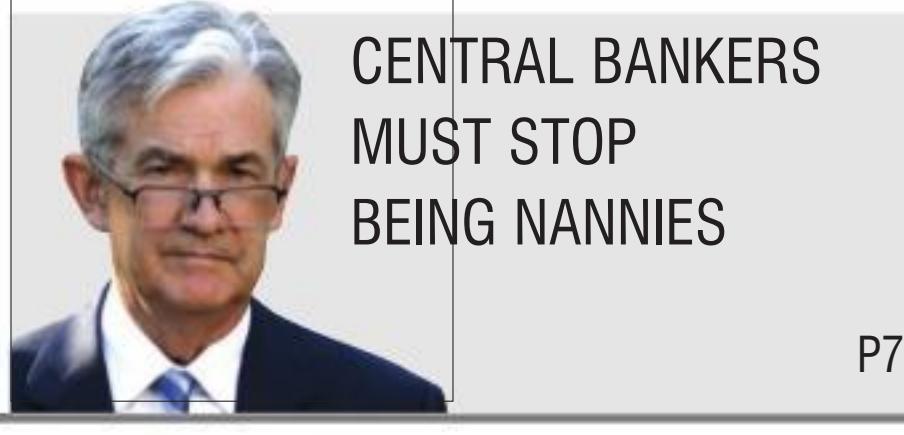
Pages 12 | ₹5 | LC

KOLKATA | NEW DELHI | SILIGURI | BHUBANESWAR



BIHAR POLICE 'CAN'T  
LOCATE' RHEA  
CHAKRABORTY

P5



CENTRAL BANKERS  
MUST STOP  
BEING NANNIES

P7



PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION

BIDEN'S SEARCH FOR  
RUNNING MATE IN  
FINAL STRETCH

P10



DHONI IS PAST  
HIS BEST, SAYS  
ROGER BINNY

P12

WEATHER

Partly cloudy sky. Very light rain/drizzle.  
The maximum and minimum  
temperatures would be around 37 and 28  
degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: 06.7 MM

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 95% Min: 58%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 36.3°C (+2) Min: 26.8°C (0)  
SUN RISES 05:44 hrs SUN SETS 19:11 hrs  
MOON RISES 18:28 hrs MOON SETS 05:05 hrs

THUMBNAILS



Amar Singh passes away: Rajya Sabha MP  
Amar Singh, who once wielded immense influence in power circles as a close aide of Samajwadi Party leader Mulayam Singh Yadav, has died in Singapore where he was undergoing treatment for kidney-related ailments. Singh, 64, had undergone kidney transplant in 2011 and was not keeping well for a long time. He was admitted to a hospital in Singapore some eight months ago.

P5

Vizag mishap: At least 11 people were killed at Hindustan Shipyard Limited in Visakhapatnam when a heavy duty crane collapsed during a trial run to test its load bearing capacity, trapping workers under its debris. Andhra Pradesh chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has ordered an inquiry into what is the latest among a series of worrisome industrial accidents that Vizag has witnessed in recent times, the last being the styrene gas leak from a LG Polymers plant which killed 12 people.

P4

## Shourie, Bhushan, Ram move SC, challenge validity of contempt law

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 1 AUGUST



Former Union minister Arun Shourie, journalist N Ram and activist lawyer Prashant Bhushan have moved the Supreme Court challenging the constitutional validity of a legal provision dealing with criminal contempt for "scandalising the court", saying it was violative of freedom of speech and right to equality.

The petition, which may come up for hearing next week, challenged the validity of Section 2(1)(c) of the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971 as being unconstitutional and incompatible to the basic feature of the Constitution and is vague and manifestly arbitrary.

The provision defines what

constituted criminal contempt and said that if by way of publication of words, the dignity of the courts is lowered and if they scandalise the courts then the offence of contempt of court is deemed to have been committed.

The impugned sub-section is unconstitutional as it is incompatible with preambular values and basic features of the Constitution. It violates Article 19(1)(a) (freedom of speech and expression), is unconstitutional and incur-

ably vague, said the plea filed through lawyer Kamini Jaiswal.

The filing of the plea challenging the validity of the provision assumes significance in view of the fact that a three-judge bench headed by Justice Arun Mishra on July 22 had issued a show cause notice to Bhushan after taking note of a petition urging it to initiate criminal contempt proceedings against him for his alleged tweets against the judiciary. This case is listed for hearing on August 5.

The top court is also scheduled to hear on August 4 another criminal contempt case against Bhushan which was initiated in 2009 over his alleged comments against former CJIs in an interview given to a magazine.

## Do not discredit your own legacy: Cong veterans to young leaders

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 1 AUGUST

Amid an ongoing tussle between the young and old guard in the Congress, party veterans urged their colleagues on Saturday not to discredit their own legacy and said by doing so, they would only be aiding the BJP's designs to undermine the party in the public eye.

Advising restraint in airing grievances in public, several former Union ministers cautioned party colleagues, saying such tendencies divide the Congress at a time when unity is needed. They also said one needs to learn from past defeats and revive the party rather than play into the hands of its "ideological enemies".

Rising in defence of the Congress-led United Progressive

Alliance (UPA), the performance of which was questioned by young leader Rajiv Satav at a recent meeting of the party's Rajya Sabha MPs, former Union minister Anand Sharma said no one discredits their own legacy.

"Congressmen must be proud of the UPA's legacy. No party disowns or discredits its legacy. Nobody expects the BJP to be charitable and give us credit, but our own should respect and not forget," the

deputy leader of the Congress in the Rajya Sabha said.

Another leader said it is sad to see certain elements in the Congress knowingly or unknowingly aiding the BJP's design of keeping the party at loggerheads in public perception, when everyone should be seen united against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his government.

"BJP was out of power for 10 years 2004-14. Not once did they ever blame Vajpayee or his Government for their then predicaments. In Congress, unfortunately, some ill-informed would rather take swipes at Dr Manmohan Singh-led UPA govt than fight NDA/BJP. When unity is required they divide," former Union minister Manish Tewari wrote on Twitter.

Replying to Tewari, former MP Milind Deora said,

"Well said, Manish. When demitting office in 2014, Dr Manmohan Singh said, 'his

party will be kinder to me.'

"Could he have ever imagined that some from his own party would dismiss his years of service to the nation and seek to destroy his legacy - that, too, in his presence?" Deora asked in a tweet.

Another former Union minister, Shashi Tharoor, agreed with Tewari and Deora and said,

"UPA's transformative ten years were distorted and traduced by a motivated and malicious narrative. There's plenty to learn from our defeats and much to be done to revive Congress. But not by playing into the hands of our ideological enemies."

Covid-19: Fresh serosurvey begins in Delhi

SNS & PTI  
NEW DELHI, 1 AUGUST

A fresh sero-prevalence survey began in Delhi today, with the five-day exercise set to cover all districts and various demographic segments. The exercise is being undertaken for a comprehensive assessment of the novel coronavirus (Covid-19) situation in the national capital.

As senior government official said 15,000 samples would be collected from 1 to 5 August as part of the exercise, spanning different areas and age groups. The representative samples will be taken from all the 11 districts of Delhi.

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

Delhi health minister Satyendar Jain on 22 July had announced that after analysing the results of the last serosurvey, it was decided that more such exercises would be undertaken every month to formulate better policies for tackling the Covid situation in the city.

The last sero-prevalence survey was conducted by the Delhi government in collaboration with the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) from 27 June to 10 July.

The last sero-prevalence survey had found that around 23 percent of the people surveyed in Delhi had been exposed to the novel coronavirus, the central government had then said.

Meanwhile, the national capital today recorded 1,118 fresh coronavirus cases, and 26 deaths due to the disease in the last 24 hours.

Delhi has so far recorded a total of 1,36,716 Covid cases, of which 1,22,131 patients have recovered, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

(SEE PAGE 2)

## Punjab hooch tragedy toll goes up to 86

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, 1 AUGUST

Tarn Taran accounts  
for 63 deaths, fol-  
lowed by 12 for Amrit-  
sar (rural) and 11 in  
Gurdaspur (Batala)

total number of arrests in the  
case has gone up to 25.

A mafia mastermind, a woman kingpin, a transport owner, a wanted criminal and owners/managers of various dhabas from where the illicit liquor was being supplied are among the arrested, Director General of Police (DGP) Dinkar Gupta said.

The raiding parties have also seized large quantities of Lahan from various villages and dhabas in the region around the Shambhu border, Rajpura and Patiala, he said, adding that the raids had exposed a

massive racket in illicit liquor, extending across several districts. The dhabas, identified as Zilmil Dhaba, Green Dhaba, Chhindha Dhaba on Shambhu, and Banur and Rajpura in Patiala, have been sealed.

Meanwhile, the CM has also announced Rs 2 lakhs ex-gratia compensation to each of the families of the deceased, most of whom are from Tarn Taran, which accounts for 63 deaths, followed by 12 in Amritsar (rural) and 11 in Gurdaspur (Batala).

Strict action will be taken against any public servant or others found complicit in the case, said the CM, describing the police and excise department failure to check the manufacturing and sale of spurious liquor as shameful.

During the 13th edition of the Facebook Live #AskCap-

## Trump says will ban TikTok in the USA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
WASHINGTON, 1 AUGUST



US President Donald Trump has said that he will act to ban TikTok as soon as on Saturday, amidst reports of American technology giant Microsoft being in advanced talks to acquire the popular Chinese-owned video app.

Trump, talking to reporters travelling with him aboard Air Force 1 from Florida on Friday, said he could use the emergency economic powers or an executive order to ban TikTok in the United States.

As far as TikTok is concerned, we're banning them from the United States, he said.

Referring to the emergency economic powers, the

administration has welcomed.

The *Wall Street Journal* reported that Microsoft, headed by Indian-American Satya Nadella, is in advanced talks to acquire the US operations of TikTok. The deal could run into billions of dollars. A deal could be completed by Monday, according to people familiar with the matter, and the talks involve representatives from Microsoft, ByteDance and the White House. Talks are fluid, and a deal may not come together, the report said.

Trump also made it clear that he was not in favour of a deal to let a US company buy TikTok's American operations. Trump added that he planned to take action against the popular video-sharing app as soon as Saturday.

India has banned as many as 106 Chinese apps, including TikTok, a move the Trump

administration has welcomed.

The last sero-prevalence survey was conducted by the Delhi government in collaboration with the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) from 27 June to 10 July.

The last sero-prevalence survey had found that around 23 percent of the people surveyed in Delhi had been exposed to the novel coronavirus, the central government had then said.

Meanwhile, the national capital today recorded 1,118 fresh coronavirus cases, and 26 deaths due to the disease in the last 24 hours.

Delhi has so far recorded a total of 1,36,716 Covid cases, of which 1,22,131 patients have recovered, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

(SEE PAGE 2)

## LOP seeks action against miscreants involved in potato adulteration racket

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 1 AUGUST

Expressing serious concern over the sale of adulterated potatoes by mixing dangerous chemicals in Delhi, Leader of the Opposition (LOP) in the Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri on Saturday urged Lt Governor Anil Baijal that strict action should be taken against miscreants involved in this racket.

The miscreants are caus-

ing great harm to the health of common people in Delhi and they should be identified and punished, Bidhuri demanded in a letter written to the Lt Governor.

The middlemen are mixing dangerous chemicals in potatoes and selling them as new potatoes at exorbitant rate in the national capital, the LOP alleged in his letter.

The doctors and experts are of the view that this adulteration of potatoes may cause harm to liver, kidney and other vital organs besides possibly causing fatal diseases like cancer, the LOP stated.

Bidhuri demanded that the investigation of the matter be given to the crime branch of Delhi Police.

He expressed surprise that the Delhi government has not taken any initiative to stop this unscrupulous business, despite the point that such adulteration has come to light in Azadpur mandi (market), which, he added, comes under the Delhi government.

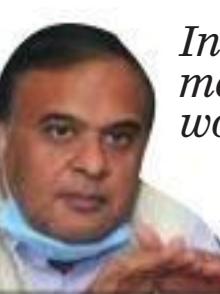
The doctors and experts are of the view that this adulteration of potatoes may cause harm to liver, kidney and other vital organs besides possibly causing fatal diseases like cancer, the LOP stated.

Bidhuri demanded that the investigation of the matter be given to the crime branch of Delhi Police.

He expressed surprise that the Delhi government has not taken any initiative to stop this unscrupulous business, despite the point that such adulteration has come to light in Azadpur mandi (market), which, he added, comes under the Delhi government.



Delhi Police commissioner S N Shrivastava launched their plantation drive by planting saplings for enhancing greenery, at the new city police headquarters on Jai Singh Road in the Capital on Saturday.



*In coordination between the Education and Health departments the compulsory sample tests of the teachers and staff would be conducted from August 23 to 30*

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA

ASSAM EDUCATION AND HEALTH MINISTER

Capital

# Covid-19: Fresh serosurvey gets underway in Capital

1,118 new coronavirus cases and 26 more deaths recorded in Delhi; recovery rate hits 89.33 pc

SNS & PTI  
NEW DELHI, 1 AUGUST

A fresh sero-prevalence survey began in Delhi today, with the five-day exercise set to cover all districts and various demographic segments. The exercise is being undertaken for a comprehensive assessment of the coronavirus (Covid-19) situation in the national capital.

The samples for this serosurvey will be first collected from four districts, including North Delhi and Northwest Delhi, today.

A senior government official said 15,000 samples would be collected from 1 to 5 August as part of the exercise, spanning different areas and age groups. The representative samples will be taken from all the 11 districts of Delhi.

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

Delhi health minister Satyendar Jain on 22 July had announced that after analysing the results of the last serosurvey, it was decided that more such exercises would be undertaken every month to formulate better policies for tackling the Covid situation in the city.

The last sero-prevalence survey was conducted by the Delhi government in collaboration with the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) from 27 June to 10 July. The fresh



Bus commuters wearing face masks amid the coronavirus pandemic, in the Capital on Saturday.

SUBRATA DUTTA

round of the survey would follow the same protocol as that followed

for the last one, officials said.

The Delhi health department has prepared a detailed plan under which every district medical officer has been asked to conduct the survey in their respective areas, they said.

All CDMOs have been tasked with carrying out the survey in their districts. Random people will be tested for antibodies.

The last sero-prevalence survey had found that around

23 per cent of the people surveyed in Delhi had been exposed to the novel coronavirus or Covid-19, the central government had then said.

The previous study had tested 21,387 samples. Prior to that survey, a similar exercise was carried out only in the containment zones of Delhi.

The Delhi government had decided to conduct more monthly serosurveys to find a greater percentage of such people who had got infected and recovered so as to formulate better policies for tackling Covid.

Jain had said.

Meanwhile, the national capital today recorded 1,118 fresh coronavirus cases, and 26 deaths due to the disease in the last 24 hours.

Delhi has so far recorded a total of 1,36,716 Covid cases, of which 1,22,131 patients have recovered, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

There are currently 10,596 active Covid cases, of which 5,560 patients are under home

isolation, the bulletin said.

The death toll due to Covid climbed to 3,989 in the city, the bulletin stated.

As many as 5,140 RT-PCR tests and 13,014 rapid-antigen tests were conducted in Delhi over the last 24 hours. A total of 10,50,939 tests have been conducted in the city till date — 55,312 tests per million population — the bulletin reported.

The Covid recovery rate has increased to 89.33 percent in Delhi now.

## 36 Delhi cops suspended for dereliction of duty

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 1 AUGUST

**Police sources say that the briefing was scheduled to discuss the arrangements for Eid and Independence day.**

pended," Deputy Commissioner of Police (northwest) Vijayanta Arya said.

This was brought to the notice of the DCP, who asked for an enquiry and asked for

a suspension of the cops, sources said, adding that they have been sent to district lines.

Police sources say that the briefing was scheduled to discuss the arrangements for Eid and Independence Day.

The personnel were posted in northwest district of Delhi Police. The suspension will continue till further order, a senior police officer said.

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 1 AUGUST

With the festival season ahead in the month of August during which kite flying is considered as an integral part of customs, the discoms have urged public not to use dangerous metal coated manjha and to avoid flying kites near power lines as this lead to fatal

accidents and tripping.

Discoms have also launched a social media campaign for mass sensitization on the subject driven by its corporate mascot Roshni.

Tata power has urged Delhiites to play safe and said that it has been observed that the use of metal coated Manjha (kite string) is quite popular amongst the kite

flying enthusiasts.

Several incidents of power tripping as well as electrocution are reported every year during this season due to entanglement of these metal coated manjhas in the overhead power lines.

"People should enjoy kite flying, but they should do it responsibly. We appeal to Delhiites not to fly kites

near electrical installations, including overhead cables; and avoid using metal coated manjha. These two simple practices will ensure safe kite flying," said Tata Power-DDL Spokesperson.

According to estimates, tripping of one 33/66 KV overhead line can disrupt power supply to over 10,000 residents of an area and trip-

ping of a single 11 KV line to over 2,500 residents. Last year, there were around 12 instances of kite-flying related trappings in Tata Power-DDL's area.

It is noteworthy here that disrupting of power supply and causing damage to power equipment is punishable under the Electricity Act and the Delhi Police Act.

## Discoms urge Delhi'ites not to use metal-coated manjha

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 1 AUGUST

The festive spirit of Eid al-Adha was subdued in the national capital on Saturday with the coronavirus pandemic badly hitting livestock sale for the festival of sacrifice and restricting many people to their homes.

Despite just around 10,000 active COVID-19 cases in Delhi -- far better than what was feared -- and easing of lockdown restrictions, many faithful preferred offering namaaz' at their homes than visiting mosques.

Jama Masjid and Fatehpuri Masjid in the old city area attracted sizable number of people for the early morning namaaz.

"People wore masks and observed social distancing. The mosque was full but the number was less than previous years, as people were not allowed to offer namaaz on the street," said Shahi Imam Mufti Mukarram of Fatehpuri Masjid.

"Eid al-Adha means the festival of sacrifices. We prayed for relief from the virus, peace and growth of the country and thanked the authorities for allowing namaaz at the mosques with precautions," he said.

Those who offered prayers at mosques said fewer number of people had turned up there, and the mood was not as ebullient as previous years.

Outside the Jama Masjid, the Delhi Police put up signboards requesting people to wear masks and ensure physical distance while offering namaaz.

Imtiaz Ahmad, who offered prayers at the mosque, said the turnout was way less than before when the crowd would spill on the streets too. People wore masks, carried their own mats and avoided hugging each other, he said.

Mohammad Riyaz, 32, who sells mobile accessories outside the mosque, said he did not have money to buy a sacrificial animal this year as he could barely earn enough to feed his family.

"I know many people who could not make a animal sacrifice this year. Bakrid is incomplete without the annual ritual. There is nothing we can offer our friends," he said.

Outside the Jama Masjid, the Delhi Police put up signboards requesting people to wear masks and ensure physical distance while offering namaaz.

Yameen Ansari, a resident of Jamia Nagar who offered prayers at Jamaat-e-Islami Hind Markaz in Azad Fazal Enclave, said though some people stepped out of their homes, unlike Eid Ul Fitr in May, the festive spirit was dim.

"People could step out as things are under control in Delhi. Still, they were not as cheerful as before," he said.

Adding friends and family have been avoiding gatherings on the festival.

Abdul Noor Shibli, a journalist, who offered prayers at the Jamaat-e-Islami Hind markaz, said it was the first time in four months that he went to a mosque. He said the mosque administration had deployed volunteers for thermal screening at the entry gates.

"People wore masks and brought their own mats. Stickers were pasted on the floor to help them maintain distance," he said, adding the turnout was half of what it used to be during festivals in normal times.

Umar Sheikh Mohammad, the president of the Nizamuddin West Resident Welfare Association, said he offered prayers at a nearby mosque but the crowd was thin. The 51-year-old busi-

nessman, however, said offering 'qurbani' was not that easy as business was down.

COVID-19 has hit businesses. People who could afford four goats till last year don't have enough money to buy even one this Eid, he said, adding, "It was also not easy to purchase a goat and bring it home, as there are restrictions on the sale of livestock due to the pandemic."

"A large number of people could not buy a sacrificial animal because the pandemic-induced economic crisis has rendered them jobless," Mohammad said.

Mohammad Ishaq, a goat seller at the famous sarpine market near Jama Masjid, said Bakrid Eid has been insipid. Every year he sold around 15-20 goats on

Eid al-Adha. This year, he has sold only four, that too at a loss.

"It (the pandemic) has sucked the life out of us," he said woefully. In a world without the coronavirus, the sale of goats would have fetched Rs 60,000 to Rs 70,000, but this year they were sold at half the price, Ishaq said.

Zaid Malik, who sells footwear in the Meena Bazaar adjacent to the Jama Masjid, said he had not earned enough to buy an animal, offer sacrifice, and distribute the meat among the needy this year.

"A goat costs around Rs 10,000. We cannot think of one. Small businesses are struggling to survive," he said. "I could not pay my employee Ifran his full salary over the last few months. So, I decided to pay the remainder of his salary on Eid."

Women safety: GBN gets scooter-borne police patrol units

PTI  
NOIDA (UP), 1 AUGUST

The Gautam Buddha Nagar police on Saturday launched their new all-female scooter-borne patrolling units with an aim to provide safety to women in Noida and Greater Noida, officials said.

Police Commissioner Alok Singh flagged off the "Swayam-Siddha" patrol units, which would frequent locations like metro stations, shopping malls, schools and colleges, auto stands and other places that witness female footfall in large numbers, the officials said.

Fifty such units were flagged off on Saturday and a total of 100 scooters have been made available for the newly-crafted patrol unit. There would be one rider per scooter, which could be a police sub-inspector, a head constable or a constable.

The uniformed personnel will be equipped with a body-worn camera, a baton and "hidden arms and ammunition", as they go around crucial spots and road stretches in the district, the officials said.

"It's an initiative by Deputy Commissioner of Police (Women Safety) Vrinda Shukla. Her department has been coming up with initiatives on women safety in the past also which have shown positive results," Police Commissioner Alok Singh said.

"Today, 50 such units have been launched. The initiative has been done after adequate research. About 163 hotspots were identified across the district where women felt need for more police security. Route charts have been prepared accordingly for the patrolling units," he said.

Additional Commissioner of Police (Crime) Shriparna Ganguly and DCP Shukla, among other officers, were present during the launch of the all-women patrolling unit.



Rohingya Muslim refugee children in new clothes play with balloons on the occasion of the Eid al-Adha festival at a camp in the Capital on Saturday.

AMARJEET SINGH

POLICE

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 1 AUGUST

The festive spirit of Eid al-Adha was subdued in the national capital on Saturday with the coronavirus pandemic badly hitting livestock sale for the festival of sacrifice and restricting many people to their homes.

Despite just around 10,000 active COVID-19 cases in Delhi -- far better than what was feared -- and easing of lockdown restrictions, many faithful preferred offering namaaz' at their homes than visiting mosques.

Jama Masjid and Fatehpuri Masjid in the old city area attracted sizable number of people for the early morning namaaz.

"People wore masks and observed social distancing. The mosque was full but the number was less than previous years, as people were not allowed to offer namaaz on the street," said Shahi Imam Mufti Mukarram of Fatehpuri Masjid.

"Eid al-Adha means the festival of sacrifices. We prayed for relief from the virus, peace and growth of the country and thanked the authorities for allowing namaaz at the mosques with precautions," he said.

Those who offered prayers at mosques said fewer number of people had turned up there, and the mood was not as ebullient as previous years.

Outside the Jama Masjid, the Delhi Police put up signboards requesting people to wear masks and ensure physical distance while offering namaaz.

Imtiaz Ahmad, who offered prayers at the mosque, said the turnout was way less than before when the crowd would spill on the streets too. People wore masks, carried their own mats and avoided hugging each other, he said.

Mohammad Riyaz, 32, who sells mobile accessories outside the mosque, said he did not have money to buy a sacrificial animal this year as he could barely earn enough to feed his family.

"I know many people who could not make a animal sacrifice this year. Bakrid is incomplete without the annual ritual. There is nothing we can offer our friends," he said.

Outside the Jama Masjid, the Delhi Police put up signboards requesting people to wear masks and ensure physical distance while offering namaaz.

Yameen Ansari, a resident of Jamia Nagar who offered prayers at Jamaat-e-Islami Hind Markaz in Azad Fazal Enclave, said though some people stepped

If elected governments start getting toppled, how can democracy survive in India? We are running a campaign to save democracy in the whole country.



ASHOK GEHLOT  
RAJASTHAN CHIEF MINISTER

The Sunday Statesman  
NEW DELHI, 2 AUGUST 2020

03

# Thakur reshuffles Himachal Cabinet, asserts authority

HP CM's move to undertake ministry expansion & reshuffle ruffles feathers in the ruling BJP circles

ARCHANA PHULL  
SHIMLA, 1 AUGUST

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur, who sent out strong signals by ignoring claims of some senior state BJP leaders and former ministers while expanding his Cabinet two days ago, again asserted his authority by reshuffling last evening his Cabinet for the first time during his government's two-and-a-half years tenure so far.

While the choice of three new ministers, barring Rakesh Pathania from Kangra, whose induction was sure, has triggered resentment in the ruling BJP circles, with four party MLAs reportedly skipping the BJP Legislature Party meeting held immediately after the Cabinet expansion, the ministry reshuffle has also ruffled feathers. The Chief Minister, who has been handling the health portfolio after former health minister Vipin Singh Parmar resigned in February before his election as Speaker of the HP Assembly, has now allocated the Health and Family Welfare portfolio along with Ayurveda to Dr Rajeev Saizal. Dr Saizal was earlier Social Justice and Empowerment and Cooperation min-



ister. CM Thakur now retains Finance, General Administration, Home, Planning, Public Works Department, Tourism, Excise and Taxation and all other portfolios not allocated to any minister.

On the face of it, the only woman minister, Sarveen Chaudhary (Kangra district) has been divested of key portfolios like Urban Development, Town and Country Planning and Housing, which have now been allocated to senior minister from Shimla, Suresh Bhardwaj. Sarveen was allocated Social Justice and Empowerment, the ministry

she held when she was minister in the BJP government from 2007 to 2012.

Bhardwaj, a senior leader but first-time minister, had been openly claiming that Urban Development, TCP and Housing portfolios were relevant in his constituency Shimla (urban) that he represents. He now walks away with a major share of portfolios — apart from these three portfolios, he has been allocated Cooperation, even as he retains Parliamentary Affairs and Law ministries.

A young first-time minister, Govind Singh Thakur, who

and minister Rajinder Garg has been allocated Food and Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs department along with Printing and Stationery.

At number two in the Thakur Cabinet, Mahender Singh Thakur retains all his portfolios, Jal Shakti, Horticulture and Sainik Welfare, along with the addition of the crucial Revenue department.

The lone minister from Una, Virender Kanwar seems to have got advantage in this exercise. He retains Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries besides getting Agriculture.

The Agriculture ministry was earlier with Tribal minister Ram Lal Markanda. Markanda now has Technical Education, Vocational and Industrial Training, Tribal Development and Information Technology.

CM Thakur has sought to give representation to Sirmaur, Kangra and Bilaspur districts in his Cabinet with the induction of three new ministers, while giving them significant portfolios. Hamirpur district, the home turf of former two-time CM Prem Kumar Dhumal, has no representation in the state ministry so far, which, party sources said, may not augur well for the BJP in the long run.

## Himachal govt extends lockdown till 31 Aug

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 1 AUGUST

The Himachal Pradesh government has extended lockdown in the state till 31 August though the government has allowed opening of gyms and yoga centres from 5 August as per the Standard Operating Procedure (SOPs).

A state government official said the new guidelines for Unlock-3 had been issued by the State Disaster Management Cell of Revenue Department as per the orders of the Union Home Ministry.

According to its order, the state government has granted permission for holding the Independence Day functions at the state, district, sub-division and local levels and 'At Home' by adhering to social distancing norms and SOPs issued from time to time.

"The state government would regulate all interstate movement of persons through COVID e-pass software and all persons will have to register themselves on software to monitor compliance with the quarantine requirements.

Further, the registration has been made mandatory to facilitate contact tracing, in case a person tests positive for COVID-19.

Besides, persons coming from high-load cities areas will have to remain in institutional quarantine, except in exceptional and compelling cases.

However, Indian Army and Central Paramilitary forces personnel have been exempted from registration



**The inter-state movement of people will continue to be managed through COVID e-pass software**

and they can enter or pass through the state by showing their identity card," he said.

The official further stated that all persons coming from foreign countries will be institutionally quarantined as per the guidelines of Union government.

The state government had allowed orchardists, contractors, project proponents and industrialists to bring labour from outside the state after registering COVID e-pass software and with the permission of district administration.

"The tourism units, hotels, restaurants and dhabs will continue to operate as per the existing guidelines while interstate movement of buses and educational institutes will remain closed," he added.

ative for COVID-19 or completing quarantine period.

He said daily, weekend commuters such as industrialists, traders, suppliers, factory workers, project proponents may enter and exit the state by providing their information to the concerned Deputy Commissioners.

Those who have already obtained permission in this regard, need not do so again, he added.

The official said the state government had allowed yoga centres and gyms to open as per the SOPs in the state while the temples and places of worship will be opened after the issues of SOPs.

"The tourism units, hotels, restaurants and dhabs will continue to operate as per the existing guidelines while interstate movement of buses and educational institutes will remain closed," he added.

## Uttarakhand to set up snow leopard conservation centre

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
DEHRADUN, 1 AUGUST

The Uttarakhand government will establish a snow leopard conservation centre in Uttarkashi.

This centre will be set up at Lankia in Bhairon Ghati. In connection with this project, Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat held a meeting with state forest minister Harak Singh Rawat and other top officials of the forest department in Dehradun on Saturday.

In the high level meeting it was decided to conduct a census of snow leopards in the hill state. Stressing the need for conservation of snow leopards, Chief Minister Trivendra Rawat said, "Those areas where snow leopards were seen in the recent years should be identified by the for-



A snow leopard pictured while heading towards a cave in Chamoli.

FILE PHOTO

est department in collaboration with local people and military forces. Census should be conducted in such areas.

Conservation of snow leopards and other wildlife will give a boost to winter tourism in the state."

## Maintain status quo on employment of accounting assistant: HC to Jamia

NEW DELHI, 1 AUGUST

The forest department conducts census of different wild animals in Uttarakhand, but they have never conducted census of snow leopards in the state. Different research reports indicate the presence of 86 snow leopards in Uttarakhand. Very recently snow leopards were sighted in districts like Uttarkashi, Pithoragarh and Chamoli. Pair of snow leopards was captured on a hidden camera at Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve recently. Forest department has registered the presence of snow leopards in many places.

A top carnivore of the ecological pyramid of the high altitude ecosystems, the snow leopard is considered as the flagship species for the high Himalayas. Snow leopard is threatened due to poaching for skin & bones (for illegal international trade).

## HP Guv, CM pay tributes to martyred soldier

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 1 AUGUST

Himachal Pradesh Governor Bandaru Dattatraya on Saturday expressed condolence over the demise of martyred soldier Rohin Kumar of 14-Punjab Regiment, who was a resident of Galore Khas of Hamirpur district.

Sepoy Rohin Kumar was martyred during the ceasefire violation by the Pakistani Army in Punchik in Jammu & Kashmir

Sepoy Rohin Kumar was martyred during the ceasefire violation by the Pakistani Army in Punchik in Jammu & Kashmir. In his condolence message, Dattatraya said Sepoy Rohin Kumar has made his supreme sacrifice for the nation and the country and state is proud of his martyrdom.

The Governor has prayed to the Almighty to give strength to the bereaved family to bear this irreparable loss.

Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur too condoled the demise of Sepoy Rohin Kumar who sacrificed his life in the service of the nation during the ceasefire violation by Pakistani army on the Line of Control (LoC) in Punchik.

The Chief Minister said that Martyr Rohin Kumar demonstrated unparalleled courage and devotion towards his duty. "He was a true hero who has left an exemplary legacy of valour and supreme sacrifice," he added.

## Prevention and Management of Childhood Diarrhoea During Monsoon 2020



27<sup>th</sup> July  
to  
11<sup>th</sup> August

### Things to note when the child gets Diarrhoea

- 1. Dissolve one ORS packet in 1 litre drinking water in a clean vessel
- 2. At the onset of Diarrhoea and after every motion give the O.R.S. solution to the child
- 3. Give 1 Zinc tablet dissolved in a spoon of drinking water or mother's milk for 14 days
- 4. During and after Diarrhoea, continue feeding mother's milk, give extra milk during and after illness and supplementary nutrition to the child

### Correct Way of Washing Hands:

- 1. Wet your hands and apply soap
- 2. Rub your fingers together with soap to create lather
- 3. Scrub your palms from the front and back, and clean the area in-between your fingers
- 4. Scrub your nails on your palms
- 5. Clean both the wrists properly
- 6. Rinse your hands properly with water

### Benefits of Zinc

- Reduces duration and intensity of Diarrhoea
- Protection from Diarrhoea for 3 months
- Increases immunity for longer period
- Dosage of Zinc tablets for different age groups
- Zinc for 14 days, once daily

### O.R.S. dosage for different age

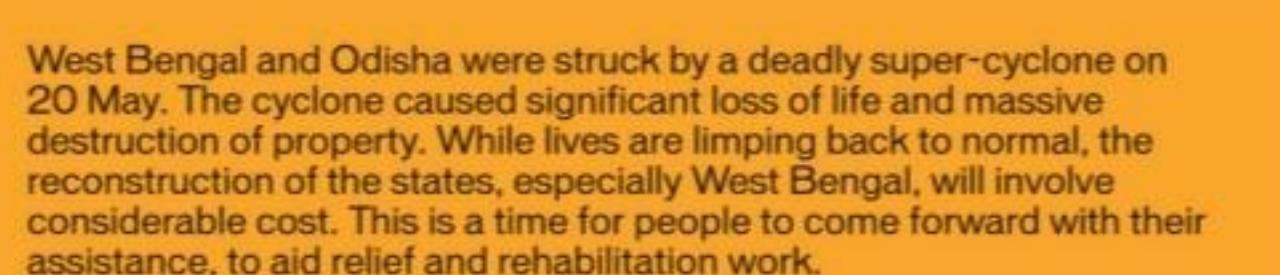
- |  |  |
|--|--|
| Less than 2 months old child   | 5 spoons of solution after every motion            |
| 2 months - 6 months old child  | 1/2 tablet (10 mg) in clean water or mother's milk |
| 6 months - 5 years old child   | 1 tablet (20 mg) in clean water or mother's milk   |
| 2 years to 5 years old child   | 1/2 cup - 1 cup after every motion                 |
| Give O.R.S. to the child from the onset of Diarrhoea and after every motion, till Diarrhoea subsides |  |

दस्त से सुरक्षित हर बच्चा प्यारा, Zero Diarrhoeal Deaths लक्ष्य हमारा

National Health Mission  
Department of Health & Family Welfare, Himachal Pradesh



**A TIME TO HELP**



West Bengal and Odisha were struck by a deadly super-cyclone on 20 May. The cyclone caused significant loss of life and massive destruction of property. While lives are limping back to normal, the reconstruction of the states, especially West Bengal, will involve considerable cost. This is a time for people to come forward with their assistance, to aid relief and rehabilitation work.

We ask readers to contribute generously to The Statesman Calamity Relief Fund, the proceeds of which will be used to aid reconstruction work. Contributions may be sent to:

THE STATESMAN CALAMITY RELIEF FUND  
ACCOUNT NO: 13032020000138  
BANK: HDFC BANK, CHOWRINGHEE SQUARE, KOLKATA  
IFSC CODE: HDFC0001303

Contributions may also be sent by cheque/DD to The Statesman Calamity Relief Fund, Statesman House, 4 Chowringhee Square, Kolkata 700 001. Donations above Rs 201 will be acknowledged in the columns of the newspaper. In the event of electronic transfers, please send us your name, address and contribution details by e-mail to editor@thestatesman.com

You may, if you wish, also contribute to

WEST BENGAL STATE EMERGENCY RELIEF FUND  
Account No. 628005501339  
BANK: ICICI BANK LTD., HOWRAH  
IFSC Code: ICIC0006280

Contributions are entitled to deduction u/s 80G of the Income Tax Act.



The government emphasises on making 'job creators' instead of 'job seekers'

PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI

ADDRESSING THE FINALE OF THE SMART INDIA HACKATHON'

**THUMBNAILS**

A man wearing a face-mask comes out of Masjid-e-Eidgah Bilal after offering prayers during the Eid al-Adha, in Bangalore on Saturday.

AFP

**Kerala records 1,129 fresh Covid-19 cases:** Kerala on Saturday reported 1,129 fresh Covid-19 cases, taking the total number of persons affected with the virus in the state to 24,742. As many as 752 patients have recovered from the disease on the day. Of the new patients, as many as 880 persons contracted the disease through contact, 89 persons had returned from abroad and 114 are returnees from other states. As many as 24 health workers also tested positive and 58 persons contracted the disease through unknown sources.

SNS

**9,276 new Covid cases in Andhra Pradesh:** Andhra Pradesh reported 9,276 fresh cases pushing up the tally 1,50,209. The toll also increased to 1,407. Telangana too doubled its tally of fresh cases with 2,083 new cases reported from the state. The total number of cases stands at 64,786 while 11 deaths in past 24 hours pushed up the toll to 530.

SNS

**Elderly couple end life fearing coronavirus:** Suspecting that they had contracted Covid-19, an elderly couple allegedly committed suicide here on Saturday. Based on investigation, the police said the couple, aged 63 and 60, had been suffering from health issues for the past few days and thought they had contracted coronavirus. The two were found lying dead in their house by one of their sons.

PTI

# 11 killed as crane collapses in Vizag

CM YSR orders the district collector to conduct an inquiry into the incident

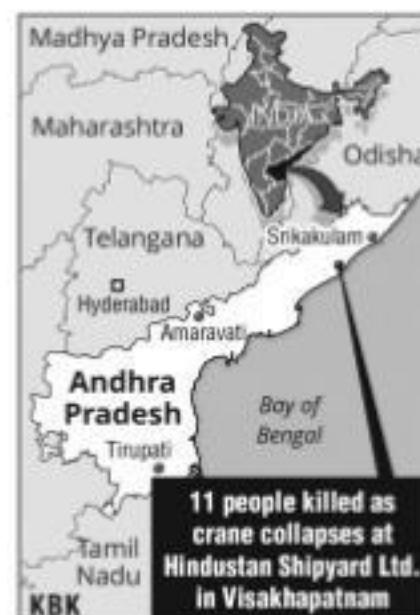
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
HYDERABAD, 1 AUGUST

**A**t least 11 people were killed at Hindustan Shipyard Limited in Visakhapatnam today when a heavy duty crane collapsed during a trial run to test its load bearing capacity, trapping workers under its debris.

Chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has ordered the district collector to conduct an inquiry into the latest one among a series of worrisome industrial accidents that Vizag has witnessed in recent times, particularly since the port city is gearing up to be the new executive capital of Andhra Pradesh.

The incident took place around 12:30 p.m. when the trial run for the new crane was being conducted by the electrical wing of HSL and three local contractors. HSL, a central government undertaking is the oldest shipyard in the country.

Collector V Vinay Chand said: "Ten bodies have been recovered and one more is still trapped. All those who were in the cabin of the ill-fated died.



11 people killed as crane collapses at Hindustan Shipyard Ltd. in Visakhapatnam

All the recovered dead bodies have been sent to King George Hospital for post mortem and other formalities."

According to district collector the jetty crane was erected two years ago but was not commissioned and HSL had a basic contract with Anupam Cranes from Mumbai for erecting the crane but the latter did not do the full loaded trial and backed out of the contract. The HSL then engaged three separate companies including Greenfield Company for operationalising the crane, Lead Engineers for



maintenance and Squad 7 for regular operation of the crane. Today HSL management with the help of three new contractors were conducting the trial run when the cabin and base snapped and collapsed.

While six of those killed were hired workers from the three private agencies four were permanent workers in the shipyard including their supervisor. Among the six workers three were from Greenfield Company, two from Lead Engineers and one from Squad 7. The collector said that there is a separate policy for compensation of HSL's own workers but the government will look into providing ex-gratia to the temporary workers of the private agencies. HSL has constituted its

own internal committee headed by the director (operations) to conduct an inquiry. "We will constitute a five member high level committee with heads of departments of mechanical engineering and civil engineering of Andhra University along with a superintendent engineer of the government to probe if the mishap was caused by human negligence," said the district collector.

This is the second big industrial accident after the styrene gas leak from LG Polymers which killed 12 people and hundreds of people had to be hospitalised. There have been two more smaller industrial accidents which saw workers killed.

**BJP leader dies of Covid:** Senior BJP leader and former minister P Manikyala Rao today succumbed to Covid while undergoing treatment at a private hospital in Vijayawada as both Andhra Pradesh and Telangana saw massive increase in numbers of infected people. The 59-year-old was a minister in the TDP government.

# Jaya's heir moves HC against TN govt's acquisition of Veda Nilayam

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHENNAI, 1 AUGUST

As reported earlier, Tamil Nadu government in its efforts to take over the possession of former chief minister J Jayalalithaa's Poos Garden residence 'Veda Nilayam', is facing legal hurdle after J Deepa, one of the legal heirs of Jaya's property and her niece, has moved to the High Court against the takeover.

The state government last week finished its final step of taking over the property to convert it into a memorial of the late leader by depositing over 67 crore rupees in the court, even as the legal heir J Deepa and her brother Deepak contested against it.

In her petition, J Deepa has sought a stay against the Income Tax Department from settling the tax dues of Rs 36 crores which the state government paid in the civil court as part of the compensation for the property. She has also sought an order against the state government from taking away the movable assets from 'Veda Nilayam'.

Deepa also sought the court to order the state government to hand over all the movable assets in the property to her since those are 'precious treasure of her ancestors for decades'.

The news about the move-



able properties in 'Veda

Nilayam' came out a few days ago when the government listed out the items.

The Madras High Court had, in May, declared J Deepa and her brother J Deepak as Jayalalithaa's legal heirs. The court also ordered the government to deposit the compensation for the property which has to be paid to them.

In the last week of July, the government of Tamil Nadu deposited Rs 67.90 crore in a city civil court as compensation to acquire Jayalalithaa's Poos Garden property.

The amount includes Jayalalithaa's pending Income Tax and wealth tax dues to the tune of Rs 36.9 crore.

The remaining amount

has been calculated based on the amount payable per square foot area of the 24,322 square feet property.

Once the Income Tax department recovers its dues

from the court, the government of Tamil Nadu will become the sole owner of the property.

The state government on 15 July, told the court that it was considering converting a portion of Veda Nilayam into the chief minister's official residence after earlier court interventions on the issue suggested it.

The court had expressed its reservations against converting the property into a memorial for the former chief minister.

The conversion of Veda Nilayam into a memorial for Jayalalithaa was one of the conditions behind the unification of the two factions of AIADMK, one led by current chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami and the other led by the current deputy chief minister O Panneerselvam, in 2017.

The party had split into two factions after Jayalalithaa's death in December 2016. Though Jayalalithaa's close aide Sasikala and her Mannaragudi clan tried to take control of the party, the sudden bonhomie between Edappadi and Panneerselvam factions thwarted it.

Sasikala and her niece Ilavarasi is serving jail term in Parappana Agrahara Jail in Bengaluru in the disproportionate income case, in which late Jayalalithaa was also a convict.

## BJP MLA protests in Kerala, seeks CM's resignation

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, 1 AUGUST

The lone BJP legislator in Kerala, O Rajagopal on Saturday began a one-day fast at the party's state committee office demanding the chief minister's resignation over the recent gold smuggling case.

The fast is part of the protests by the BJP seeking the resignation of chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan as he was "morally responsible" for the gold smuggling through diplomatic baggage.

BJP national general secretary Bhupendra Yadav inaugurated the fast through video conference and state party chief K Surendran presided over the meeting.

The saffron party has also decided to organise a virtual rally in the capital city and it will be inaugurated by former state president Kummanam Rajashekharan.

Union minister V Muraleedharan has also decided to observe a fast at his residence in New Delhi on 2 August seeking the resignation of the CM.

The state government has been under heavy criticism on the gold smuggling issue after two former employees of the UAE Consulate here were arrested along with a few others.

The Opposition parties have been alleging that the chief minister's office was involved in the matter, a claim which has been dismissed by the state government.

The NIA and the Customs have questioned senior IAS officer M Sivashankar, who was also the former principal secretary and the IT secretary in the state in connection with the case. He was suspended after reports about his alleged contacts with a few of the accused.

## Siddaramaiah mocks at BJP's threat to sue him

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
BENGALURU, 1 AUGUST

The BJP not only dismissed the charges but also decided to sue the Congressman.

The Congress leader mocked that the question asked to the government is responded by the BJP with a legal notice. "I had accused the government of corruption in covid management but there is someone called Ravi Kumar who says he has sent me a legal notice. Let him send it. We will face it," Siddaramaiah said.

Ravi Kumar had also questioned Siddaramaiah's competence to speak about corruption when he could not answer where he got the expensive Swiss watch from.

In reaction, Siddaramaiah said the case is now a closed chapter after the anti-corruption bureau gave him a clean chit. "I have returned the watch to the government," he said. Then he sought to know whether he should also dig out previous corruption charges involving CM Yediyurappa.

## Assam flood situation improves, Covid continues

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
GUWAHATI, 1 AUGUST

The flood situation in Assam has significantly improved even though the mighty river Brahmaputra and its tributaries are flowing above the danger mark in various locations. The annual disaster claims 109 lives, which has been chasing by Covid-19 pandemic with 98 casualties till Saturday afternoon.

The third wave of flood continues to affect over 11 lakh people in the districts of Goalpara, Dhubri, South Salma, Barpeta, Morigaon, etc. Over 1,300 villages in 21 districts are still under the deluge, where more than 82,150 hectares of crops are inundated.

At present, nearly 30,000 people are taking shelter in various relief camps as the flood rendered them homeless. World famous Kaziranga National Park is also inundated by the flood water killing at least 145 wild animals including 16 precious one-horn rhinoceros.

Visiting Safakamar, Chunbari, Bispani, Mathanguri areas, governor Mukundan inspected the entry point of river Beki that causes perpetual flood and erosion every year. It may be

Over 105 hog deer, eleven wild boars, five wild buffaloes, etc were also drowned in the flood water. Besides Kaziranga, Manas NP, Orang NP, Pabitora Wildlife Sanctuary, etc are also severely affected by the disaster.

Presently, Assam has 9811 active Covid-19 cases, where 30,357 individuals were released from hospitals after medical interventions. State health minister Himanta Biswa Sarma informed that till Saturday, 40,269 people tested positive for corona virus infection. He apprehended that the active cases in the state might increase in the coming few weeks.

State governor professor Jagdish Mukhi recently visited the flood hit Barpeta and Bokakhat localities where the overflowing rivers created havoc, rendering thousands of families homeless.

noted that an integrated scheme amounting to over rupees 203 crore was sent to the Centre for clearance which is allotted for the management of affected areas.

The state government in Dis-

nate the efforts for the tests that will be conducted from 23 to 30 August, the minister said.

"We have drawn up a preliminary plan for reopening schools but it is still open for further discussions with parents and other stakeholders, and will be implemented only in accordance with the directives of the Union government," Sarma said. Classes will be held in open spaces such as the playground or courtyard of the school, he added.

pur is trying to find out a durable solution to the flood problem while the governor assured that he would take up the matter urgently with the concerned Central agencies in New Delhi.

**NEXT TO GOD**

A mediaperson (R) films idols depicting the present pandemic scenario where Ganesha is treating a Covid-19 patient, ahead of the Ganesh Chaturthi festival, in Bangalore on Saturday.

## 28-day quarantine for new jail inmates in Punjab

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, 1 AUGUST

Every new jail inmate in Punjab is being kept under quarantine for 28 days as part of the strategy to deal with Covid-19 pandemic.

For this purpose, the Punjab government has converted six jails into special jails for new inmates. Jail minister Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa on Saturday said under the 'Mission Fateh' campaign launched by the Chief Minister Amarinder Singh against the Corona pandemic, six jails in Punjab have been converted into quarantine jails for new inmates. In the first phase, Barnala and Patti Jails were converted into quarantine jails.

In addition, two more jails namely Gurdaspur and

Malerkotla have been declared as Level-1 Covid Care Centers of Treatment for Covid infected Inmates.

In view of the growing outbreak of Coronavirus, Bathinda, Pathankot, Ludhiana and Women Cell Ludhiana have been declared as special jails. Giving more details, the minister said that every new prisoner is first sent to these jails where after full screening they are kept under quarantine as per the directions of the Supreme Court.

After testing, the inmates are sent to Sangrur Jail where they are quarantined for another 14 days as a precaution. Then they are shifted to other jails as per their capacity if their reports come out negative.

A total of 25 jails in Punjab have a capacity of 23,500 inmates at present and there

are 17,000 inmates in the jails. Randhawa said that 11,500 prisoners have been released on parole since March following the decision of the High Powered Committee to ensure compliance of social distancing norms in the jails as per the directions of the Supreme Court.

The Punjab government had also extended the maximum parole period from 16 weeks by amending the Act for good conduct prisoners. He said that out of 17,000 prisoners, 9,000 have been tested for Covid out of which 150 have tested positive so far.

These prisoners are being shifted to Gurdaspur and Malerkotla Jails for treatment where Level-1 Covid Care Centers have been established by the Jail Department.

and the lockdown to contain the coronavirus came into effect on 23 March. "Due to unavailability of the notary services at that time, the report could not be notarized and filed as an affidavit."

The department officials had submitted it as a report mentioning the reason and requesting the tribunal to deal with solid waste management.

The Environment Department is now to submit the affidavit on the status report within the next stipulated date in September.

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, 1 AUGUST

The National Green Tribunal has directed the state Environment Department, Bidhan Nagar Municipal Corporation, New Town Kolkata Development Authority and Nababganj Industrial Township Authority to file a status report on the action plan to prevent spillage from dumping sites near Mollar Bheri into the water bodies of East Kolkata Wetlands. According to the order



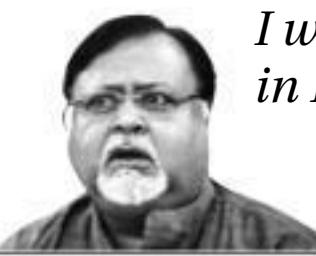
dated 28 July, earlier the tribunal had directed all the four bodies to file affidavit on latest status report requiring the principal secretary of the department to monitor the compliance of the directions. While BMC has files and affidavit on the status none of the others have complied with the directions, the order reads.

Even as the counsel of the state government claimed that Environment Department has filed report on 23 March, no such affidavit is

on record of the tribunal, mentions the order.

Notably, in November 2019, the tribunal directed the BMC to deposit rupees 50 Lakhs as performance guarantee to the Central Pollution Control Board and furnish an action plan along with time lines to within 15 days to address the matter.

The NGT had also expressed its dissatisfaction over BMC for its plans of processing waste in decentralised manner by installing organic waste converters



I wonder how come they (Centre) thought of enforcing it without any discussion in Parliament and with the state governments. This is unilateral...

HITTING OUT AT THE CENTRE FOR FORMULATING NEP WITHOUT TAKING PARLIAMENTARY APPROVAL OR CONSULTING STATES

WEST BENGAL EDUCATION MINISTER PARTHA CHATTERJEE

The Sunday Statesman  
NEW DELHI, 02 AUGUST 2020

05

## THUMBNAILS



People take shelter during rain at a market in New Delhi on Saturday. ■ AFP

**Maoists held in Ch'garh:**  
Two Maoists were arrested from separate places in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district on Saturday, police said. Mahesh Yadav (32) was nabbed from Tindodi village under Bhairamgarh police station limits and Manku Modiyam (32) from Chilhar village under Bijapur police station area. PTI

**Maha factory blast:** Five workers were killed in a boiler explosion at Manas Agro Industries and Infrastructure Ltd in Maharashtra's Nagpur district on Saturday afternoon, the police said. The incident took place near a biogas plant of the company at Bela village in Umred tehsil around 2.15 pm. PTI

**Driver mows down cop:** A 28-year-old driver of a mini-truck was arrested for allegedly mowing down an on-duty Assistant Commissioner of Police from the traffic department in Delhi's Rajokri area, officials said on Saturday. The accused has been identified as Amit Pulami, a resident of Mahipalpur, they said. PTI

**110-tonne govt rice seized:** Police in Maharashtra's Navi Mumbai have seized 110 tonnes of government rice worth Rs 33 lakh before it could be sold in the open market, an official said on Saturday. The rice was meant to be distributed among the poor in view of the pandemic, he said. PTI

## Former SP leader Amar Singh dies at 64 in S'pore



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 1 AUGUST

Rajya Sabha MP Amar Singh, who once wielded immense influence in power circles as a close aide of Samajwadi Party leader Mulayam Singh Yadav, has died in Singapore where he was undergoing treatment for kidney-related ailments.

Singh, 64, had undergone kidney transplant in 2011 and was not keeping well for a long time. He was admitted to a hospital in Singapore some eight months ago.

"Amar Singh Ji was an energetic public figure. In the last few decades, he witnessed some of the major political developments from close quarters. He was known for his friendships across many spheres of life. Sadened by his demise," Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in a tweet.

Amar Singh is survived by his wife Pankaja Singh and two daughters - Drishiti and Disha.

Earlier in the day, the former Samajwadi Party leader had posted messages on Twitter, paying tributes to Bal Gangadhar Tilak on his 100th death anniversary and also wishing people on Eid.

A colourful and flamboyant politician who often did not pay much heed to demands of political correctness in his interactions,

## Covid severely hits festive buzz, dampens celebratory mood

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 1 AUGUST

The festive spirit of Eid al-Adha was subdued in the national capital on Saturday with the coronavirus pandemic badly hitting livestock sale for the festival of sacrifice and restricting many people to their homes.

Despite just around 10,000 active cases in Delhi - far better than was feared - and easing of lockdown restrictions, many faithful preferred offering 'namaz' at their homes than visiting mosques.

Those who offered prayers at mosques said a fewer number of people had turned up there, and the mood was not as ebullient as previous years.

Outside the Jama Masjid, the Delhi Police put up sign-

boards requesting people to wear masks and ensure physical distancing while offering 'namaz'.

Imtiaz Ahmad, who offered prayers at the mosque, said the turn out was way less than before when the crowd would spill on the streets too. People wore masks, carried their own mats and avoided hugging each other, he said.

Yameen Ansari, a resident of Jamia Nagar who offered prayers at Jamaat e-Islami Hind Markaz in Azu Fazal Enclave, said though some people stepped out of their homes, unlike Eid Ul Fitr in May.

"People could step out as things are under control in Delhi. Still, they were not as cheerful as before," he said, adding friends and family have been avoiding gatherings

on the festival. Abdul Noor Shibli, a journalist, who offered prayers at the Jamaat e-Islami Hind markaz, said it was the first time in four months that he went to a mosque. He said the mosque administration had deployed volunteers for thermal screening at the entry gates. "People wore masks and brought their own mats. Stickers were pasted on the floor to help them maintain distance," he said, adding the turnout was half of what it used to be during festivals in normal times.

Umar Sheikh Mohammad, the president of the Nizamuddin West Welfare Association, said he offered prayers in a nearby mosque but the crowd was thin. The 51-year-old businessman, however, said offering 'qurbani' was

not that easy as business was down.

Covid has hit businesses. People who could afford four goats still last year don't have enough money to buy even one this Eid, he said, adding, "It was also not easy to purchase a goat and bring it home, as there are restrictions on the sale of livestock due to the pandemic."

"A large number of people could not buy a sacrificial animal because the pandemic-induced economic crisis has rendered them jobless," Mohammad said.

Mohammad Izhaar, a goat seller at the famous sarpine market near Jama Masjid, said Bakr Eid has been insipid. Every year he sold around 15-20 goats on Eid al-Adha. This year, he has sold only four, that too at a loss.

## Muslims in Kashmir Valley offer Eid prayers while maintaining social distancing

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
SRINAGAR, 1 AUGUST

Eid al-Adha celebrations in Kashmir on Saturday were a low-key affair as most of the faithful marked the festival of sacrifice by offering prayers in small groups and observing social distancing in view of the pandemic.

No Eid prayers were offered in major mosques and shrines of Kashmir as police enforced the strict restrictions in most parts of the valley, including Srinagar city, officials said.

Concertina wires and barricades were placed at many



A security personnel in front of Jama Masjid, in Srinagar ■ AFP

intersections in the city to prevent free movement of people, they said. People preferred to offer Eid prayers at home -- either individually or in small groups consisting of family members only, the officials said.

## 'No improvement in J&K situation over past year'

Tourism & IT sectors are in bad shape, militancy has not gone down: CCG to Centre

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 1 AUGUST

### The Group has urged the Centre to release Mufti and all Kashmiris who were taken into preventive detention and restore 4-G service

Mufti. During its two visits in September and November 2019, the Group members met a cross section of people - journalists, civil rights activists, a Kashmiri Member of Parliament, Members of Kashmir Chamber of Commerce, lawyers and farmers.

"We found that the Centre's actions had led to shock, trauma and humiliation amongst the local citizens," the Group said. The Kashmiris seem to believe that the Indian government wants to marginalise them, the Group said.

The internet ban in J&K which began on 5 August last year continued with only 2G connectivity being provided now. This had affected students, job seekers, entrepreneurs, businesses and ordinary citizens alike, and created havoc in banking, trade, business and healthcare.

There are estimated to be 14 lakh children who were learning from online services. The 2G technology cannot sustain online learning, which is a ready option being used in the rest of the country. The school students in the rural areas who do not have either laptops or smart mobile phones are losing out a great deal, the Group said.

Kashmir's economy was also plunged into an abyss with the sudden and mass exodus, in early August, of tourists and the non-Kashmiri labour force. The tourism and IT sectors are in bad shape. Militancy has not gone down, according to the Group.

The Group has urged the Government to release Mufti and all Kashmiris who were taken into preventive detention under Public Safety Act (PSA) and restore 4-G communication in J&K.

The Group said all curbs on all peaceful political activity be ended and a multi-level dialogue process with all those affected by the 5 August, 2019 decision be started. Do not push through laws in the absence of a legislature, the Group said.

The Group said all curbs on all peaceful political activity be ended and a multi-level dialogue process with all those affected by the 5 August, 2019 decision be started. Do not push through laws in the absence of a legislature, the Group said.

An Army soldier, Rohin Kumar, was martyred on Saturday when Pakistan Army resorted to unprovoked ceasefire violation on the LoC in Rajouri Sector of Jammu.

Sepoy Rohin Kumar belonged to the Hamirpur district of Himachal Pradesh.

Army spokesman, Lt. Colonel Devender Anand said Rohin Kumar was critically injured and later succumbed to his injuries.

"Our troops responded strongly to the enemy fire," he said. Sepoy Rohin Kumar was a brave, highly motivated and a sincere soldier, the spokesman added.

At about 3 am on Friday, Army noticed suspicious movement of unidentified persons 600 metres on this side of LoC at Machhal Sector, Kupwara. Infiltrating terrorists were intercepted by our troops and firefights ensued.

SNS

### Jawan killed in Pak firing

JAMMU, 1 AUGUST

An Army soldier, Rohin Kumar, was martyred on Saturday when Pakistan Army resorted to unprovoked ceasefire violation on the LoC in Rajouri Sector of Jammu.

Sepoy Rohin Kumar belonged to the Hamirpur district of Himachal Pradesh.

Army spokesman, Lt. Colonel Devender Anand said Rohin Kumar was critically injured and later succumbed to his injuries.

"Our troops responded strongly to the enemy fire," he said. Sepoy Rohin Kumar was a brave, highly motivated and a sincere soldier, the spokesman added.

At about 3 am on Friday, Army noticed suspicious movement of unidentified persons 600 metres on this side of LoC at Machhal Sector, Kupwara. Infiltrating terrorists were intercepted by our troops and firefights ensued.

## SAFETY FIRST



Muslim devotees offer prayers at Masjid-e-Eidgah Bilal during the Eid al-Adha, in Bangalore on Saturday. ■ AFP

### Mother-son duo from Maha conquer SSC exams together

PUNE, 1 AUGUST

While most parents push their children to study hard for the Maharashtra state board exams, Baramati resident Bebi Gurav led by example, by appearing for the exam along with her son and passing out with flying colours.

The 36-year-old secured 64.40 percent marks, while her 16-year-old son Sadanand scored 73.20 per cent in the Secondary School Certificate examination, results of which were declared on July 29.

"I could not complete my school education because of my marriage at a very young age. But my husband encouraged me to appear for the Class 10 exams with my son," said Bebi, who works for a cloth manufacturing firm. The woman's husband Pradip Gurav and her son helped her study and egged her on the journey to becoming an SSC passout.

"We are unable to locate her (Rhea Chakraborty). We are trying to locate her," Pandey said in reply to a question by media persons in Patna whether the Bihar police has served any notice to the actress to meet and talk to her in connection with its FIR against her. Asked whether any lookout notice has been issued against the actress or the Bihar police trying to arrest her, Pandey said, "this is quite an early stage of investigation".

"Both my wife and son studied hard together and secured good marks. I am happy and proud of their performance," said Gurav, a journalist with a regional daily. Bebi would carry her textbooks to work and study during breaks and revise grammar, mathematics and other subjects with her son, while cooking meals for the family.

## Meat transporter attacked by group of men in Gurgaon, 1 arrested

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
GURGAON (HARYANA), 1 AUGUST

A 27-year-old man transporting buffalo meat was waylaid by a group of men and thrashed publicly before the police came to his rescue in Haryana's Gurgaon district, officials said on Saturday.

The incident took place on Friday morning and one of the accused has been arrested after an FIR was lodged in the case, a police official said. Videos of the incident also surfaced on social media, purportedly showing the group of men kicking and dragging the pick-up driver, while one of them used a small hammer to hit the victim multiple times.

Videos of the incident also surfaced on social media, purportedly showing the group of men kicking and dragging the pick-up driver, while one of them used a small hammer to hit the victim multiple times.

One of the videos showed a policeman standing next to the victim, dressed in a T-shirt and track-pants, while several people were seen witnessing the violence unfold on the road as mute spectators.

Victim Lukmaan told the police that he was transporting buffalo meat in his pick-up truck from Nuh to Sadar Bazaar area of Gurgaon. When he reached Gurgaon, he was chased by some men on motorcycles. He sped away but got waylaid and thrashed by them, Gurgaon Police PRO Subhash Boken told PTI.

They later took him to another place near Sohna and beat him up again, and

The incident took place on Friday morning and one of the accused has been arrested after an FIR was lodged in the case, a police official said. Videos of the incident also surfaced on social media, purportedly showing the group of men kicking and dragging the pick-up driver, while one of them used a small hammer to hit the victim multiple times.

also damaged his vehicle, the PRO added.

He said Lukmaan was hospitalised with injuries and an FIR registered under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code including rioting, voluntarily causing hurt, among others.

One of the accused persons has been arrested. He has been identified as Pradeep Yadav, around 25 years old. He is a native of Bhiwani district but currently lives in Rajiv Nagar of Gurgaon, Boken said.

The other accused have also been identified and efforts are on to arrest them soon, he added.

The cause of the incident was not clear immediately, the police said, adding that a probe is underway to ascertain all details.

## Sushant case: Bihar cops 'unable to locate' Rhea Chakraborty

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
PATNA/NEW DELHI, 1 AUGUST



The Bihar police chief on Saturday said it was unable to 'locate' actress Rhea Chakraborty named in its FIR in the abetment to suicide case in the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput while her plea before the Supreme Court for transfer of the probe from Patna to Mumbai is listed for hearing on August 5.

A four-member Bihar police team is in Mumbai since Wednesday to probe the FIR registered in Patna against Chakraborty, 28, and six others including her family members based on the complaint filed by Rajput's father, Krishan Kumar Singh (74) had lodged the complaint for the alleged abetment to suicide of his son on Tuesday.

As the probe into Rajput's death escalated into a face-off between Bihar and Maha-

ashtra governments ahead of Assembly polls in the eastern state, BJP leader and Bihar's deputy chief minister Sushil Modi targeted Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray.

"Uddhav Thackeray government in Maharashtra is under pressure from Congress-funded Bollywood mafia and that is why hell bent on saving elements linked to the actor's death case," Sushil Modi alleged in a tweet in Hindi. "Bihar government will go to any extent to bring justice to Sushant."

Thackeray on Friday said he deplored attempts to question the efficiency of the Mumbai Police in handling the

case.

PTI

probe.

Rajput, 34, was found hanging in his suburban Bandra apartment in Mumbai on June 14.

Bihar's Director General of Police (DGP) Gupteshwar Pandey said the state police has not yet been able to "locate" Chakraborty, who was Rajput's girlfriend. A police team member, who did not identify himself, said earlier in the day in Mumbai that the actress was "under our watch".

"We are unable to locate her (Rhea Chakraborty). We are trying to locate her," Pandey said in reply to a question by media persons in Patna whether the Bihar police has served any notice to the actress to meet and talk to her in connection with its FIR against her. Asked whether any lookout notice has been issued against the actress or the Bihar police trying to arrest her, Pandey said, "this is quite an early stage of investigation".

Experts say the current situation between the two sides clearly indicates that India will have to be prepared for a long haul and the border stand-off might not ease any time soon.

"We are unable to locate her (Rhea Chakraborty). We are trying to locate her," Pandey said in reply to a question by media persons in Patna whether the Bihar police has served any notice to the actress to meet and talk to her in connection with its FIR against her. Asked whether any lookout notice has been issued against the actress or the Bihar police trying to arrest her, Pandey said, "this is quite an early stage of investigation".

&lt;p

## A hurdle cleared

With gubernatorial assent having been granted to the Andhra Pradesh Decentralisation and Inclusive Development of All Regions Bill, 2020 and the Andhra Pradesh Capital Region Authority (Repeal) Bill, the stage appears set for the state to have different seats for the three organs of governance. The executive capital will be located at the port city of Visakhapatnam, the High Court for the state will be established at Kurnool and the legislature will operate from Amaravathi, the dream project of the previous dispensation that saw the region near Vijayawada become the focal point for speculative real estate deals, with property prices at one point of time giving Mumbai a run for their money. With the birth of Telangana and its takeover of Hyderabad, the capital of the undivided state, Andhra Pradesh needed a new capital. Historically, Kurnool had a claim because it had once been the capital. Realistically, Visakhapatnam was the logical choice, being a well-established city with an airport, a port, advanced infrastructure facilities and access to major highways. The government of N Chandrababu Naidu pulled a rabbit out of the hat with its proposal for a spanking new city, adjacent to Vijayawada, and incidentally the stronghold of the affluent Kamma community to which the former Chief Minister belonged. Several questions were raised about the need for such extravagance, but Mr Naidu brushed these aside. While many landowners in the region became overnight millionaires, the project went ahead in fits and starts, not least because the parlous state of the coffers did not quite match the scale of Mr Naidu's ambition. By the time his Telugu Desam party lost power in 2019, the project was running out of steam and the last nail was hammered in by the World Bank's withdrawal of support, quickly followed by the backing out of the Asian Development Bank. The project was beset with problems, and there were allegations that the previous government had ignored adverse environmental, social and financial implications of the project. Experts who had objected to the project questioned the wisdom of constructing mammoth infrastructure on the black soil plains of low-lying Amaravathi.

While some of the construction in Amaravathi is in advanced stages, the three-city solution is in many ways an elegant one. It is also politically adept in that it addresses regional aspirations, with the long-deprived Rayalseema getting the High Court. A well-developed city like Vizag will now get its due. Also, it is a practical solution because the State faces both a fiscal and revenue deficit. However, it will adversely affect the many realtors who had launched mega housing projects in Amaravathi, as these will now find few takers. About the only hurdle the revised scheme may face is from the many legal challenges mounted by farmers in Amaravathi. But that may not be a major impediment as the Governor is learnt to have sought counsel from legal experts before granting assent to the two Bills.

## When death is life

Almost alone among the world's leaders, Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro has been remarkably consistent in his response to the coronavirus, and unfazed by widespread criticism of the way he has led his country through the public health crisis. Freshly cured of the virus, Mr Bolsonaro returned after three weeks of quarantine to tell Brazilians there was nothing to worry about as nearly everyone would end up catching it. Urging his countrymen to "face up to it", the 65-year-old Brazilian president cited his own example to embolden them. "I'm in the high-risk group. I knew I was going to catch it someday, as I think unfortunately nearly everyone here is going to catch it eventually. What are you afraid of? Face up to it. I regret the deaths. But people die every day, from lots of things. That's life," Mr Bolsonaro was quoted as saying. In the past, he had compared the virus to a little flu, resisted stay at home measures and routinely flouted social distancing guidelines. Last Thursday, he came out after three weeks and met supporters, even taking his face mask off to loud cheers. The same day, it was reported that his wife had tested positive, but neither that nor a self-confessed "mouldy lungs" infection, caused according to him by inactivity and for which he is taking antibiotics, appear to deter him.

Not surprisingly, Brazil announced last week that it was opening its doors to international air tourists provided they came with adequate health insurance to cover the duration of their trip. Entry by land and sea is still not permitted. Brazil thus became the first country in the region to open itself to tourists, despite the severity of the virus outbreak it has reported. By the weekend, the country had reported 2.67 million infections - the second highest in the world - and more than 92,000 deaths. Nearly 700,000 cases are still active. While Brazil has opened its doors, not too many countries have taken reciprocal action.

The United States and the European Union, which are open for international travel, still bar visitors from Brazil. Mr Bolsonaro and his supporters have repeatedly claimed that the virus in the country has peaked but this is belied by official statistics which showed that last week the country recorded the most deaths ever from the virus. Wire agencies have quoted the well-regarded head of the department of infectious diseases at a prestigious state university as saying Brazil is experiencing the worst phase of the pandemic. The expert, Dr Alexandre Naique said: "Paradoxically, public policy and personal behaviour are going in the opposite direction, as if we are not living through a daily tragedy." But Mr Bolsonaro refuses to be detained by such pronouncements.

# Anathema to China

If India can achieve the same rate of growth as compared with China by following a democratic path with all its potholes, China has a problem when there is a democratic yearning among its own people. This is precisely the reason why Beijing has enforced the draconian national security law in Hong Kong which jettisons the 'one country, two systems' as envisaged in the Sino-British Joint Declaration and the Basic Law



What happened in the Galwan Valley on the Line of Actual Control in Ladakh on 15 June between the Indian Army and the PLA may, in military parlance, be an issue of persistent security dilemma existing between the two countries. On deeper analysis, however, it is the symptom of the disease and not the disease itself. The disease is the democratic deficit of China, a regimented and totalitarian state as contrasted with India's vibrant democracy.

Born contemporaneously, India in August 1947 and China in October 1949, the two became competitive models of state craft and development in the Asian firmament. While China, emerging from the internecine civil war, was again caught up in the fight against the USA in the Korean Peninsula in the 1950s and in the domestic strife of Rural People's Commune and later in the 'Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution' from 1966 to 1969 which convulsed China's polity and economy, India embarked on its democratic experimentation and consolidation.

It was only after the end of the 'Cultural Revolution' that China established diplomatic relations with the USA in 1972 and after Deng Xiaoping's 'four modernisations' and economic reforms and liberalisation of 1978 that the Chinese economy took off in its trajectory of growth and development benefiting from Foreign Direct Invest-

ment' particularly from the USA and integrating with the world market.

India's boisterous democracy and compulsions of electoral politics on the contrary stymied its economic prowess and potential. India's democracy nonetheless has a self-healing capacity to absorb and withstand a myriad of challenges.

In per capita income (PP), it is worthwhile to note that India was ahead of China in 1870s and as late as the early 1970s. Even today and until recently the two were in neck-to-neck competition for the tag of world's fastest growing economy. In 2018 India was the fastest growing economy of the world.

If India can achieve the same rate of growth as compared with China by following a democratic path with all its potholes, China has a problem when there is a democratic yearning among its own people. This is precisely the reason why Beijing has enforced the draconian national security law in Hong Kong which jettisons the 'one country, two systems' as envisaged in the Sino-British Joint Declaration and the Basic Law. This is also the reason why China is critical of Tsai Ing-wen, the Taiwanese President and the leader

of Democratic Progressive Party of Taiwan.

The contestation between two competitive models of India and China is getting exacerbated with India's economic rise which has of course suffered due to the Covid-19 pandemic, but has all the potential to bounce back sooner rather than later with the government's dynamic initiatives and resolve to recalibrate the economic parameters.

China has prided itself on its economic achievements being the second largest economy of the world following a totalitarian and repressive regime. Having suffered indignity at the hands of the West particularly during the 'opium war', China is showing belligerence with a veneer of arrogance. At times it has also ridiculed and trivialised India's democracy. The Global Times, the mouthpiece of the Communist Party of China has derided and mocked at India's democracy from time to time.

True, China is a multi-trillion economy and much bigger economically than India. China, however, suffers from a congenital complexity of democratic deficit in relations with India and this is more so when there is a suppressed desire among a sub-

stantial chunk of the Chinese population for democracy and freedom. The Tiananmen Square incident of 1989 was only the tip of the iceberg.

There is a pent-up aspiration for freedom. True, China has uplifted a substantial chunk of its population out of poverty and has afforded them a better quality of life; but then man doesn't live by bread alone. Fulfilment of basic necessities of life is fine, but once these are met and even if they are not met, every individual is a freedom loving person.

The India-China relationship has always been complex and a 'contrived' one. The kind of bizarre incident that happened on 15 June was only waiting to happen. It was the outburst and outpouring of China's animus against India. India's rise as a democratic country is something that China cannot digest. The chances of India picking up the momentum of its earlier growth rate may not be possible in the immediate future, but is certainly a possibility in the medium term future.

However China may try to paper over the injury and the wound inflicted on India in which China also suffered casualties, the fact remains that India-China relations cannot be the same again. As neighbours the two countries need to realistically reassess and recalibrate the relationship between themselves shorn of rhetoric and clichés. India has realised that China only respects raw military power and strategic heft.

A MEMBER OF THE **ANN**  
ASIA NEWS NETWORK

ASIAN VOICES

## Covid-19 test kits

What has happened to the Covid-19 test kits developed by University of the Philippines scientists? How come they seem to have disappeared, while the government has relied on imported coronavirus test kits? Those are valid, reasonable questions, but they can get you a vicious tongue-lashing from the country's top diplomat, on Twitter no less. Ask Sen. Francis Pangilinan, who posed the questions on Monday. Out of the blue, Foreign Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. went berserk and, in the kind of discourse he has patented on social media that totally debases his office, lobbed an expletive-flecked rant at Pangilinan.

No doubt the outburst had shock value, and was red meat for administration partisans who delight in piling on opposition figures such as Pangilinan, but his line of inquiry was left dismissed: Why should government spend taxpayer money on imported test kits when a locally-produced kit is much cheaper? Why was it taking the Department of Health (DOH) so long to release for commercial use the local test kit that was ready for mass use as early as April, but which it recalled in mid-May over some "minor defects"? And did someone profit and benefit from the pricey imported test kits used in the meantime? The last question is nothing new. In May, Sen. Panfilo Lacson raised concerns over what he described as a "pattern of overpricing"

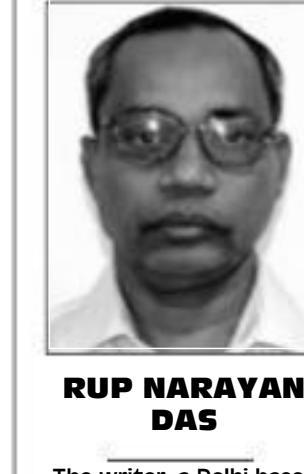
**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER**

in the DOH's procurement of Covid-19 medical supplies. While it was "fixing" the defects of the local test kit which, it turned out, centered on contaminated imported reagents used and not on the unit itself, the DOH started importing test kits from China in massive numbers. In his rabid tweet, Locsin maintained that Chinese and South Korean test kits are simply better ("They're proved to fucking work that's fucking why. I am not gonna let our people die in the name of Filipino First"). However, other countries had reported instances of having to return China-made test kits that failed accuracy and sensitivity tests, and the DOH itself disclosed in March that some China kits it got were only 40-percent accurate, though it later apologized and retracted the statement after the Chinese Embassy complained. The DOH did announce over the weekend that the UP-made test kits are now ready for commercial use. The kits, which use the same technology as the first units donated to the Philippines by the World Health Organization, were approved by the Food and Drug Administration for commercial sale on July 10.

**IN MEMORIAM**

**MAJUMDAR ANIMA** — Who left us this day in 2007. Remembered with love and respect. — Family.

It is only after the end of the 'Cultural Revolution' that China established diplomatic relations with the USA in 1972 and after Deng Xiaoping's 'four modernisations' and economic reforms and liberalisation of 1978 that the Chinese economy took off in its trajectory of growth and development benefiting from Foreign Direct Invest-



RUP NARAYAN DAS

The writer, a Delhi based Chartered Accountant, is currently a senior fellow of Indian Council of Social Science Research at the Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi. The views are personal.

It was only after the end of the 'Cultural Revolution' that China established diplomatic relations with the USA in 1972 and after Deng Xiaoping's 'four modernisations' and economic reforms and liberalisation of 1978 that the Chinese economy took off in its trajectory of growth and development benefiting from Foreign Direct Invest-

ment' particularly from the USA and integrating with the world market.

India's boisterous democracy and compulsions of electoral politics on the contrary stymied its economic prowess and potential. India's democracy nonetheless has a self-healing capacity to absorb and withstand a myriad of challenges.

In per capita income (PP), it is worthwhile to note that India was ahead of China in 1870s and as late as the early 1970s. Even today and until recently the two were in neck-to-neck competition for the tag of world's fastest growing economy. In 2018 India was the fastest growing economy of the world.

If India can achieve the same rate of growth as compared with China by following a democratic path with all its potholes, China has a problem when there is a democratic yearning among its own people. This is precisely the reason why Beijing has enforced the draconian national security law in Hong Kong which jettisons the 'one country, two systems' as envisaged in the Sino-British Joint Declaration and the Basic Law. This is also the reason why China is critical of Tsai Ing-wen, the Taiwanese President and the leader

## BANKING WOES

SIR, The government has reduced working hours of public sector banks from the earlier 32 hours per week to not more than about 18 hours per week. My wife has an account in Allahabad Bank, Behala and I had to go there to get some clarification. The internet was down and there was no long queue. I could enter easily and the security man directed me to an employee.

The space between us was blocked by rope, table and chair and I was asked to state my problem from a distance of about ten feet. When I asked how I, an 83-year-old wearing a mask, could do so from 10 feet, I was directed to a lady. The space was blocked by two tables and I could barely explain my problem when I was asked to come on a day when the internet was up.

Banks now operate for less than 18 hours a week, with lockdowns on two days and reduction of working hours. There are long queues outside every bank branch with customers standing like baggers. I have not been able to go to my bank in New Alipore due to fear of Covid and I do not know if it will be possible to go there in the near future. But who thinks about the common man? Ministers do not go to banks and stand in queue. Is there a remedy?

Yours, etc., Rishi Kumar, Kolkata, 28 July.

## Rosy but false

SIR, Apropos the editorial, 'Unduly optimistic' (28 July), RBI governor Shaktikanta Das's claims are not based on convincing figures. Data from the banking sector reveals that credit off-take after the policy announcements made by RBI continue to be very sluggish. Many businesses are finding the moratorium on repayment of term loans costly, since a later payment will mean a higher interest obligation in the future.

Yours, etc., SS Paul, Nadia, 28 July.

### BAD IDEA

SIR, With due respect to Maj Gen Harsha Kakar (retd.), I wish to point out that selling BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles to ASEAN nations (28 July) is a shortsighted idea. China already has a record of befriending nations which were once thought to be allied to India, e.g. Nepal, Iran, Bangladesh, and Myanmar.

This has often happened due to India dropping the ball in bilateral relations. A BrahMos given to some country today may become a matter of concern tomorrow as loyalties change.

Besides, let us not become merchants of death by exporting weapons. Instead, India should strive to become a great country, confident in its own prowess.

Yours, etc., Subhendu Ghatak, Kolkata, 28 July.

### NOT SHARP ENOUGH

SIR, 'A little too late' on July 26 is undoubtedly a sharp editorial comment. But it is not as sharp as it should have been considering affront meted out to the late PV Narasimha Rao, the best Prime Minister of India.

Mrs Sonia Gandhi, who was the last word in India from May 2004 to May 2014, hatched many vulgar plans to install her son as prime minister of India. She sent Prabab Mukherjee to Raisinga hill. And it is still a mystery why Rahul was allowed to condemn suddenly the ordinance to embarrass PM Manmohan Singh, who was that day about to meet American President Obama at Washington.

Narasimha Rao was a person with exceptionally innovative ideas. Within one year, he brought Punjab back to the mainstream and turned around the country from a fiscal mess. He is often referred to as the father of "Indian economic reforms". But such a genius who was not subservient to the Gandhi family could not have a party run under a single family.

So he was directed to be treated untouchable in the party like a Covid-19 patient even on the day of his death.

Now when the party is reduced to insignificance, Mrs Gandhi is endorsing Rao without feeling any mortification. Still, let it happen for the interests of democracy.

Yours, etc., Prasanta Basu Ray, Chandannagar, 29 July.

### SOME DAY IT STOPS

SIR, In case of my father at age 91, where no fewer than six urological surgeons rec-







As a result of robust volume growth, fertiliser companies are expected to post healthy profits in first quarter of 2021

K RAVICHANDRAN  
ICRA GROUP HEAD & SENIOR V-P

## THUMBNAILS

**GST compensation:** Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday said the Attorney General's view on GST compensation was sought after consultation with the states and a meeting of the GST Council would be held to discuss the legal opinion. The finance minister was responding to a question on apprehensions raised by certain states about the reported AG opinion on GST compensation.

PTI

**Steel production:** The steel sector in India has started showing signs of improvement and in the month of June the country's crude steel production stood at 6.8 million tons (MT), according to the ministry of steel.

PTI

**FCA India recall:** Automobile maker FCA India on Saturday said it is recalling 547 units of its 'MY20 Jeep Compass' model to rectify fitment of a 'brace nut' which is used in wiper assembly as a precautionary exercise. The company said it identified "an opportunity to improve the fitment of a 'brace nut' which is used in the wiper assembly of MY20 Jeep Compass vehicles" during a regular vehicle quality audit process.

PTI

**NMDC's new CMD:** Sumit Deb has assumed charge as chairman-cum-managing director of NMDC Limited on 1 August 2020. Prior to assuming the role of CMD, he was director (personnel) and succeeds N Baijendra Kumar, who has superannuated from the services of the company on 31 July 2020. He brings with him vast knowledge gathered through his extensive experience at RINL & NMDC and aspires to help NMDC reach new heights and levels of success, according to a statement issued by NMDC. SNS

**Sony launch:** With the current lockdown situation in the country leading to a high demand for home audio-video products, Sony India has introduced the latest addition to the soundbar range, the HT-G700. The new model offers powerful and immersive sound so that customers can stay entertained while keeping safe at home, says a company release.

SNS

**Ashok Leyland:** The flagship company of the Hindujas, Ashok Leyland has delivered more than 1,350 vehicles from its latest range of Modular Trucks, AVTR, with i-Gen6 BS-VI technology, across the country. The company launched AVTR in Guwahati, Tezpur, Silchar, Alipurduar, Siliguri and Port Blair and delivered the vehicles to customers, says a Press release.

SNS

**Bangla Keyboard:** Bobble AI, leading conversation media platform, has launched Bangla Keyboard. It allows users to switch between English and Bengali, through easy access, says a Press release.

SNS

# Domestic auto sector crawls towards recovery

Maruti reported a 1.3% rise in domestic PV sales in July while that of Hyundai Motor fell by just 2%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 1 AUGUST

## RAY OF HOPE

The country's largest car maker Maruti Suzuki India today reported a 1.3 per cent increase in domestic passenger vehicle sales in July while that of the second biggest maker Hyundai Motor India fell by just 2 per cent, signalling recovery in the sector hit hard by Covid-19.

Other manufacturers, Mahindra & Mahindra (M&M) and Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) reported huge declines in their domestic sales during the month.

Maruti Suzuki India said its domestic sales in July stood at 1,01,307 units as against 1,00,006 units in July 2019 with sales of mini cars comprising Alto and S-Presso jumping 49.1 per cent to 17,258 units compared to 11,577 units in the same month last year.

► Maruti Suzuki India said its domestic sales in July stood at 1,01,307 units as against 1,00,006 units in July 2019 with sales of mini cars comprising Alto and S-Presso jumping 49.1 per cent to 17,258 units compared to 11,577 units in the same month last year

► Rival Hyundai Motor India Ltd (HMIL) saw its

10.4 per cent to 51,529 units as against 57,512 cars in July last year.

On the other hand, sales of utility vehicles, including Vitara Brezza, S-Cross and Ertiga, increased 26.3 per cent to 19,177 units as compared to 15,178 in the yearago month.

MSI's total sales were down 1.1 per cent at 1,08,064 units in July as compared to 1,09,264 units in the same month last year.

Rival Hyundai Motor India Ltd (HMIL) saw its domestic



domestic sales at 38,200 units last month as against 39,010 units in July 2019, down by 2 per cent.

► M&M reported a 35 per cent decline in domestic sales at 24,211 units last month compared to 37,474 units in July 2019

sales at 38,200 units last month as against 39,010 units in July 2019, down by 2 per cent. Its total sales were down 28 per cent at 41,300 units as against 57,310 units in the same month last year.

Commenting on the sales performance, HMIL director (sales, marketing & service) Tarun Garg said the company has been able to contribute towards triggering the country's economic revival.

"With the changing trend of preference for personal mobility, our consistent efforts

are towards fulfilling the customer needs and meeting the market demand," he said.

M&M reported a 35 per cent decline in domestic sales at 24,211 units last month compared to 37,474 units in July 2019. Its total sales were down 36 per cent at 56,678 units as against 40,142 units in the same month last year.

"At Mahindra, we are happy to see a growing trend in our overall vehicle sales, buoyed by the continuing revival in demand, primarily in rural and semi urban India," M&M Ltd

are towards fulfilling the customer needs and meeting the market demand," he said.

M&M reported a 35 per cent decline in domestic sales at 24,211 units last month compared to 37,474 units in July 2019. Its total sales were down 36 per cent at 56,678 units as against 40,142 units in the same month last year.

"At Mahindra, we are happy to see a growing trend in our overall vehicle sales, buoyed by the continuing revival in demand, primarily in rural and semi urban India," M&M Ltd

chief executive officer, automotive division Veejay Ram Nakra said.

It is encouraging to see that the enquiry and booking levels in July are significantly higher compared to June, both for utility vehicles and small commercial vehicles, he added.

"As we ramp up production, the biggest challenge is on the supply side and working around these challenges is our top priority," Nakra said.

Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) reported a 48.32 per cent decline in domestic vehicle sales to 5,386 units in July compared to 10,423 units in the same month last year.

"Despite various challenges, the month of July witnessed better sales in terms of both retail and wholesales when compared to June," TKM senior vice-president, sales and service, Naveen Soni said.

In two-wheeler segment, Hero MotoCorp reported a 3.97 per cent dip in sales to 5,14,509 units as compared to 5,35,810 units sold in July 2019.

sish Panda said.

Similar procedure as with regard to companies would be adopted to sanction loans to these professionals running their business, he said.

To include more companies to take benefit of the scheme, he said, it has been decided to increase the upper ceiling of loans outstanding to Rs 50 crore and including certain individual loans given to professionals like doctors, lawyers and chartered accountants for business purposes under its ambit. The tweaking of the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme was done based on demand from trade bodies and in line with new MSME definition approved by the Union Cabinet in June.

Briefing the media about the changes made, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the scheme will now include individual loans given for business purposes within the ambit of the ECLGS, subject to the eligibility criteria of the scheme.

"We have also decided to cover individual loans given to doctors, chartered accountants for business purposes under the scheme," financial services secretary Deba-

pal said.

Announced as part of the

Rs 20.97 lakh crore government

economic package to tackle the impact of Covid-19, the

scheme will now be applicable for companies with an annual turnover of Rs 250 crore as against the earlier Rs 100 crore. Banks and non-

banking financial companies (NBFCs) have approved loans worth about Rs 1.37 lakh crore while disbursement stood at Rs 87,227 crore at the end of 29 July.

## GST collections lower at ₹87,422 crore in July

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 1 AUGUST

on import of goods) and cess is Rs 7,265 crore," the statement said. During the month, GST revenues of all major states were down in the range of 15-20 per cent over July 2019.

The ministry further said although the June collections were higher than that in July, however, it is important to note that during the previous month, a large number of taxpayers also paid taxes pertaining to February, March and April 2020 on account of the relief provided due to Covid-19.

It may also be noted that the taxpayers with turnover less than Rs 5 crore continue to enjoy relaxation in filing of returns till September 2020.

The gross GST revenue collected in the month of July 2020 is Rs 87,422 crore, of which CGST is Rs 16,147 crore, SGST is Rs 21,418 crore, IGST is Rs 42,592 crore (including Rs 20,324 crore collected

5 to 90 per cent of the corresponding period last year.

This is also collaborated with number of E-way Bills being generated on a daily basis, which indicates that supply chain is getting back to normal though imports still seem to be lower than domestic output.

"Overall, this augurs well for the government and collections are likely to improve further as lockdown is eased progressively. Industry can perhaps hope for some more GST relief, particularly in form of liquidity support as they navigate through the slowdown," Jain added.

EY Tax Partner Abhishek Jain said a collection approximate to 86 per cent of last year does showcase quite a significant economic recovery from the pandemic though a bit of it could be on account of pent-up demand.

## Govt to come out with strategic sectors list soon: Sitharaman

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 1 AUGUST

imum four PSUs in case of those falling under the strategic sector.

Either they will be merged, or they will be brought together in such a way that there are only four or lesser, she said.

Under the policy, a list of strategic sectors will be notified where there will be at least one and a maximum of four public sector enterprises, apart from private sector companies.

In other sectors, Central public sector enterprises (CPSEs) will be privatised depending upon the feasibility.

"We would like to announce a PSE policy (as) a self-reliant India needs a coherent policy. All sectors will be opened to private sectors also."

"PSEs will continue to play an important role in defined areas. We need a coherent policy because sometimes you open up some sectors in piecemeal... Now we shall

define the areas... where their presence will be impactful felt," Sitharaman had said while announcing the package.

There are some kinds of green shoots but the government is cautious about these parameters, she said, adding that the economy is at a stage where every sector is trying to beat pandemic and revive.

"Hopefully this will help revive the economy, and the government is willing to head and keep all options open... RBI has reached out to the industry with liquidity, and other than just monitoring inflation it has also kept growth in mind. Economy will benefit from this," she said.

Asked about the privatisation of banks, she said the government has only cleared the proposal to privatisate IDBI Bank so far.

The government currently owns 46.5 per cent stake in IDBI Bank.

## Construction equipment sales volume decline

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI, 1 AUGUST

ment sales volume has nose-dived 70 per cent on-year in the first quarter, and utilisation has nearly halved," the agency said.

Construction equipment business, comprising backhoes, excavators, cranes, compactors and loaders, has run into greasy grounds, it said.

Last fiscal the sector witnessed a 20 per cent volume decline.

The second half of the current fiscal could see more whirr and hum. However, volume could retract since public spending will be diverted towards healthcare and public welfare. That means lower investments in infrastructure and therefore, slack demand for construction equipment," it said.

According to the ratings agency, volume would decline on-year this fiscal, especially since public spending will be diverted towards healthcare and public welfare.

"With the Covid-19 pandemic induced lockdown bringing construction activity to a halt and labourers trudging back to the presumed safety of their native place, construction equip-

## UCO Bank ready to come out of PCA framework: Official

KOLKATA, 1 AUGUST

State-owned UCO Bank, which posted net profit for two successive quarters, is ready to come out of the RBI's prompt corrective action (PCA) framework, an official said today.

In May 2017, the central bank had initiated PCA against the lender due to high non-performing assets and negative return on assets.

"We are ready to approach the RBI to come out of the framework, as the bank posted net profit for two successive quarters," the official said. He said non-performing assets and capital adequacy norms levels as on 30 June also entitles the bank to move out of the lending constraints' purview.

## GDP growth to lose momentum from Q3: Oxford Economics

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 1 AUGUST

"In our baseline, we expect GDP growth to lose momentum from late Q3 on, once the push from the initial reopening fades and, likely compounded by the ongoing pandemic and inadequate policy support, legacy economic headwinds re-assert themselves."

"The risk clearly is that proactive steps by regional governments, especially the richer ones, to stem the spread of the virus bring the tipping point forward," it said.

According to Oxford Economics, early data suggests that the positive economic impact of the accelerated lockdown exit will be felt in June, with the effect reinforced by a global growth pick-up

that has aided a recovery in exports.

"The outlook beyond that, however, has turned more worrisome. The reopening drive is already beginning to hit roadblocks, amid the surge in Covid-19 cases," it observed.

It pointed out that new virus hotspots have emerged across the country since late June and, barring Delhi, no major region has had notable success in containing the virus.

"While we do see a high probability of restrictions being tightened anew, we do not expect them to match the stringency of the phase one of the nationwide lockdown that caused the maximum economic damage," it noted.

ATF price hiked by 3%; LPG, petrol, diesel rates unchanged

NEW DELHI, 1 AUGUST

Jet fuel or ATF price today was hiked by 3 per cent, the fifth straight increase in two months, while there was no change in rates of cooking gas LPG, petrol and diesel.

Aviation turbine fuel (ATF) rates went up by Rs 1,304.25 per kilo litre or 3 per cent in the national capital to Rs 43,932.53 per kl, according to a price notification of state-owned oil companies.

ATF price was last hiked by 1.5 per cent or Rs 635.47 per kl, on 16 July. This was the fifth straight increase since June. In four hikes, rates went up by Rs 22,483.91 per kl.

Rates were hiked by a record 56.6 percent (Rs 12,126.75 per kl) on 1 June, followed by Rs 5,494.5 per kl (16.3 per cent) increase on 16 June. Price was hiked by Rs 2,922.94 per kl or 7.48 per cent on 1 July.

ATF prices are revised on 1st and 16th of every month based on average of benchmark international price and foreign exchange rate in the preceding fortnight.

Petrol and diesel prices, which are revised on a daily basis, were kept unchanged today.

The price of petrol has not changed for over a month now. It sells for Rs 80.43 a litre in the national capital since 29 June.

Diesel, on the other hand, has seen sporadic rates

# Situation in Covid-19 hotspot Ganjam has improved says Naveen Patnaik

Odisha CM opens two COVID hospitals in Ganjam, 85 per cent rural Ganjam in green zone, recovery rate higher than national average

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

BERHAMPUR, 1 AUGUST

**M**ore than 85 percent of rural Ganjam is in green zone and the recovery rate in Ganjam is much higher than the national average, said Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik today.

Ganjam is the epicentre of the pandemic in Odisha with the highest caseload and fatalities as well.

Odisha government has come in for sharp criticism for its inability to tackle the spiralling cases in the district via video conference.

He pointed out that besides the high recovery rate, the positivity rate in the district has also

shown a downward trend.

My government will leave no stone unturned in fighting the pandemic and saving lives, said the CM. He referred to the success of plasma therapy in the district.

The two new standalone COVID Hospitals will definitely strengthen our hands in the fight against Covid in the district, he said.

He did concede that lakhs of migrants living outside Odisha had returned to Ganjam district, specially from hotspot areas.

However, the dedication and sacrifice of our Covid war-



riors, cooperation and support from people of Ganjam district, the district is fighting the pandemic very well, he said.

The CM iterated the only way to effectively fight this pandemic is through using Mask, following social dis-

tance norms and other Government regulations.

As per official information, till Saturday Ganjam had reported 10672 positive cases and 99 deaths related to COVID-19. Ganjam district administration has decided to keep borders of the district sealed during the Unlock-3 process in August.

Berhampur Municipal Corporation (BeMC) region will also be a restricted zone with restrictions on 'in and out' movements of citizens, except for urgent needs. In August, the district will have weekend shutdown on Saturdays and Sundays. On all other days of the week,

shops and trading will be allowed from 5AM to 4PM.

The collector Vijay Amruta Kulange claimed that the situation was under control in Ganjam and 7130 persons infected by the coronavirus had been cured, which is 69 percent of the total number of persons reported positive till date.

The daily average testing during the past week in Ganjam district was around 469 per day. Each of the two newly inaugurated COVID hospitals have 150 bedded with 24 ICUs.

One of them is to function on MKCG Medical College and Hospital campus in

Berhampur and it is a complete government health facility. The other one, Ashwini COVID Hospital at Kanisi on the outskirts of Berhampur has been established on PPP mode to function as an extension of the hospital at MKCG Medical College. These two COVID hospitals add up to the existing Tata Steel Medica COVID Hospital with 200 beds at Sitalapali near Berhampur. District collector Vijay Amruta Kulange informed that the district has facility of 3750 beds in COVID Care Centres (CCC) and 5000 beds in COVID Care Homes (CRH).

Ten deaths and 1602 new COVID cases in Odisha

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhubaneswar, 1 AUGUST

Side by side with the biggest single day spike of 1,602 infections, Odisha today reported 10 COVID deaths , taking the toll to 187.

While Ganjam reported for five deaths, three patients in Khurda died of the infection. Gajapati and Sundargarh districts accounted for one death each, according to official sources.

If July had been the worst in terms of rise in cases as well as deaths, August has begun on an equally bad note.

Odisha reported the death of as many as 161 COVID patients in a July which is 86.09% of the State's fatality count.

The deaths were reported from 1 July till date, indicating that around six patients are dying every day of the disease in July. The death toll was 26 on 30 June.

As the country's COVID-19 fatality rate stands at 2.18 percent, Odisha has reported 0.55% death rate, one of the lowest .

## BJP changes tact in Odisha, trains guns on Naveen Patnaik govt

Top central BJP leader in direct contact with BJD MLAs

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

BHUBANESWAR, 01 AUGUST

The BJP , which has been overtly friendly with the ruling BJD since its electoral drubbing in 2019, seems to have changed track over the last one week by turning bitterly critical of the Naveen Patnaik government.

In fact it has not only blamed the state government for its failure in COVID 19 management, but has demanded intervention of the centre to check spiralling cases and increasing number of causalities.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has failed people of his home district Ganjam and needs to seek assistance of the central government just as it was done by the Delhi government , stated BJP leaders

The sudden aggression on the part of the BJP whose top leadership has been going out of the way considering the BJD more of an ally ( the BJD gifted a Rajya Sabha seat to the

BJP after the general elections) than an opponent, has triggered several theories and speculations.

The most potent one doing the rounds is that a powerful BJP leader at the centre is directly in touch with several BJD MLAs. The backroom exercise is on full swing and the saffron party is waiting for an opportune moment to strike at the BJD ( implicitly noting at the expertise of the party in causing splits like in Karnataka, MP and the ongoing effor t in Rajasthan).

Quiet a few ruling BJD MLAs confide that some of them have been in touch with the highly ambitious central BJP leader.

While the future plan of the BJP remains in the realm of speculation, the fact is that the BJP in Odisha has decided to play the role of an opposition party and shed its pro-BJD image.

After Amit Shah's Mission 120' flopped in 2019 elections despite the all out efforts from Shah-Modi and Dhar-

mendra Pradhan , the BJP had quickly mended fences and cosied up to the BJD.

Such was the bonhomie that the BJD gifted a Rajya Sabha seat to the BJP candidate Ashwini Vaishnav.

This was a shocker to many - the language and discourse had drastically changed from the 2019 promise of putting 'all those involved in the mega chit fund scam, mining scam, pulses scam in jail within 90 days of coming to power'. Over the last one year, the BJP in Odisha which, for the first time ever, acquired the status of the major Opposition party, had seemingly surrendered its newly acquired position.

Many within the BJP were disillusioned.

Till two weeks ago , the 'direction' was to stay off from criticising the Naveen Patnaik government. Permissions had to be sought from the top to take up any issue or address the media.

When the state Congress and a few activists raked up a storm over alleged pro-

curement scam relating to COVID related purchases like masks, PPEs, ventilators etc, the BJP was almost silent.

All that has changed . The 'permission' has been granted and everyday the state BJP leaders attack the Naveen Patnaik government on alleged COVID mismanagement, fudging figures relating to recovery and deaths, irregularities in PMAY, FSA etc. Interestingly, the ruling BJD has also started issuing counters and rebuttals on a regular basis.

Odisha BJP should look at how one lakh COVID patients are added in two days in the country and India is second highest in COVID numbers in the world, chided the BJD.

The BJD claimed that Odisha nationally and internationally is being acclaimed for its good work in COVID management. Stanford University in a study stated that Odisha is one of the top 3 best-performing states in India for providing COVID quality data reporting and Management.

When the state Congress and a few activists raked up a storm over alleged pro-

Genomes study shows all five clades of COVID in Odisha

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

BHUBANESWAR, 1 AUGUST

The analysis of genomes conducted by Institute of Life Sciences and RMRC shows presence of all five clades of COVID 19 genome in Odisha with initial strains among migrants from Gujarat and then evolving in to three other clades.

From the results it is obvious that Europe and Southeast Asia are the two major routes of disease transmission in Odisha said Dr Sanghamitra Pati, Director of ILS.

Union Minister of Science and Technology Dr. Harsh Vardhan had earlier during the day announced the completion of 1000 COVID-19 viral genomes by the Autonomous Institutes of the Department of Biotechnology, Govt. of India. ILS.

Bhubaneswar; NIBM, Kalyani; CDFD, Hyderabad; NCCS, Pune and in STEM, Bangalore carried out analysis of the 1062 genomes from 18 states of India.

Initial results indicate that multiple lineages of SARS-CoV-2 are circulating in India, probably introduced by travel from Europe, USA and South East Asia.

Institute of Life Sciences in collaboration with RMRC analyzed 225 viral genomes of COVID-19 positive patients those migrated from 13 Indian states and the samples for sequencing were collected during March and July 2020.

These sequencing data analysis and interpretation was carried out by the team led by Dr. Sunil Raghav of ILS and Dr. Jyotirmayee Turuk of RMRC using advanced sequencing facility

at IISL. Analysis of Odisha samples showed the presence of all five reported clades 19A, 19B, 20A, 20B and 20C of COVID-19 genome.

Clade 19B was found to be much more prevalent in analysed samples (17%) as compared to other genomes reported so far from India. Majority of the 19A and 19B clades were present in cases that migrated from Gujarat state suggesting it to be one of the major initial points of disease transmission during month of March and April.

The analysis also revealed higher proportion symptomatic patients with clades 20A, 20B and 20C. The Clade 20C was observed in Odisha and not present any other isolates included in 1000 genome analysis.

## Juvenile home reports 44 +Ve cases

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

BERHAMPUR, 1 AUGUST

At least 44 inmates of Government Special Observation Home for boys in Berhampur have tested COVID 19 positive.

Of the 100 juvenile delinquents in conflict with law, swab samples of 60 of them were

subjected to lab tests. 44 samples were tested positive today, officials said. The home is run by the Women and Child Welfare department. The State has so far reported 95 infections in jails of which 57% (54) of cases are from Berhampur circle jail.

The Choudwar circle jail accounts for 10 infections so far.

## Villagers stall eviction drive for petrochem project

BALASORE, 1 AUGUST

Government officers assigned to demolish illegal prawn dykes constructed on government land had to return as residents led by the women folk opposed did not allow them to do so. The local officers including the tehsildar Dipak Das, IIC Bimal Nayak were accompanied by two platoon police force as the land was to be made encroachment free for the multi crore Haldia Petrochemical project. When the team was entering the village, women blew conchs alerting others and within seconds the villagers gathered to block the officials.

For over two hours the officers and police tried to persuade the villagers to make way but failed.

Land is to be cleared of encroachments in six villages for the petrochemical project. 3500 acres of land is required for it. People have been farming and indulging in prawn culture over such land since decades.

## '13% families in migrant-prone western Odisha dist went without food for a day'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

BHUBANESWAR, 1 AUGUST

With pandemic leaving them jobless, people in distress migration affected pockets of western Odisha had to go hungry for a day due to unavailability of food at home during the enforced lockdowns, claimed a survey by a Right to Food Campaign outfit.

More than 50% families covered under social security entitlements in migration-hit districts of western Odisha have resorted to consume less

to cope with food insecurity. Thirteen per cent went without food for a day, said the survey.

The sample survey, conducted in migration-prone Bargarh, Balangir, Kalahandi and Nuapada districts by Odisha Khadya Adhikar Abhijan, an outfit representing the cause of right to food, claimed that two third of the families (69%) had to borrow or take a small loan from relatives or neighbors to buy food items during the period of lockdown.

The objective of the study was to assess the accessibility

of government schemes relating to food, pension and work and find out the state of food security among the sample population. We found the senior citizens, physically challenged, single women have suffered the most due to pandemic and lockdowns", said Sameet Panda, Co-Convenor, Odisha Khadya Adhikar Abhijan.

PDS coverage must be made universal in the state at least till the pandemic subsides, he said, suggesting disbursal of advance ration to the Food Security Act beneficiaries for the

next 3 months which should include basic items like pulses, salt, oil.

As the people have little money left with them, the distribution of essential ration like pulses and edible oil is the need of the hour.

No PDS beneficiaries should be excluded from the scheme due to non seeding of Aadhaar and all such persons excluded from ration must be added in PDS immediately, he said seeking advance payment of social security pension for six months to all pension beneficiaries.

## Kendrapara doctors protest custodial torture of two colleagues

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

KENDRAPARA, 1 AUGUST

Doctors in Kendrapara district resorted to cease work to protest against the alleged illegal arrest of two doctors of a private hospital and the alleged custodial torture .

Earlier two doctors besides six other employees of a private hospital here were arrested today on the charge of assaulting the policemen.

The police version of the story was that the cops were beaten up by the doctors and

the hospital staffs while they were investigating a complaint lodged against the hospital management.

The doctor duo and hospitals allegedly meted out custodial torture by the cops in Kendrapara town police station. After being beaten up last night, they were forced to sleep on the floors with inner wear. As the news of police atrocities spread, the doctors staged a sit-in protest. However the emergency services were exempted from the sit-in protest. After several hours the stir was

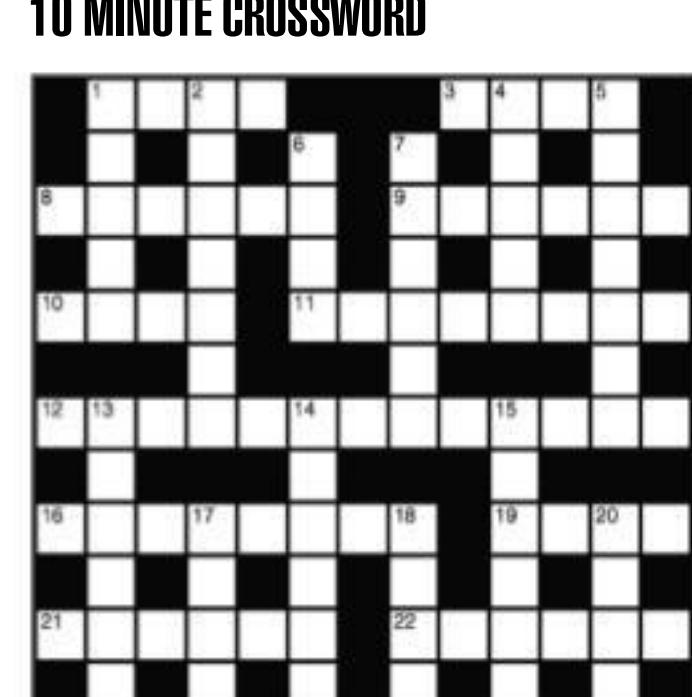
called off following assurances of probe and action by the collector.

"It's quite shocking to note that the doctors and health professionals of a private hospital were arrested and were tortured in custody. Police swung into action on a false complaint and unleashed torture upon the COVID warriors", alleged Sanjiv Sethy, secretary of the district unit of Odisha Medical Services Association.

Meanwhile eight including two doctors were later bailed out by a local court.

## LEISURE

### 10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



## THUMBNAILS



People take part in a demonstration to protest against the current measures to curb the Covid-19 spread in Berlin. AFP

**Okinawa declares state of emergency:** Japan's Okinawa region has declared a state of emergency and asked people to stay home for two weeks as the popular tourist destination sees an 'explosive spread' of coronavirus cases. Governor Tamaki asked residents to avoid non-essential outings following a record new daily addition to the southern island's total cases. AFP

**Afghan floods:** Flash flooding in eastern Afghanistan killed at least 16 people after heavy rains swept parts of a mountainous area, an Afghan official said on Saturday. Heavy floods hit Khowja district and four others were wounded. The flash floods damaged dozens of homes, said a governor spokesman. AP

**Iasas lashes Bahamas :** Hurricane Iasas ripped shingles off roofs as it carved its way through the Bahamas on Saturday and headed toward the Florida coast, where officials in Miami said they were closing beaches and parks. Miami-Dade Mayor Carlos Giménez said Friday that 20 evacuation centers were on standby that could be set up with Covid safety measures. AP

# Mexico third in global virus toll, Vietnam struggles anew

China reported 50% drop in new cases in a possible sign that latest outbreak may have run its course

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
PARIS, 1 AUGUST

**M**exico now has the third most Covid-19 deaths in the world, behind the United States and Brazil, while former success story Vietnam is struggling to control an outbreak spreading in its most famous beach resort.

China reported a more than 50% drop in newly confirmed cases in a possible sign that its latest major outbreak in the northwestern region of Xinjiang may have run its course.

However, in Hong Kong, infections continue to surge, with more than 100 new cases reported as of Saturday among the population of 7.5 million. Officials have reimposed dining restrictions and mask requirements.

Mexican health officials on Friday reported 688 new deaths, pushing the country's total to 46,688. That put Mexico just ahead of the United Kingdom, which has 46,119, according to the tally by Johns Hopkins University.

In Vietnam, a third person died of coronavirus complications, officials said, a day after it recorded its first-ever death as it struggles with a renewed outbreak after 99 days with no local cases.

All three died in a hospital in Da Nang, a hot spot with more than 100 cases in the past week. Thousands of visitors had been in the city for summer vacation and are now being tested in Hanoi and elsewhere.

Twelve additional cases were confirmed on Saturday, all linked to Da Nang Hospital. The city has tightened security and set up more checkpoints to prevent people from leaving or entering the city, which has been in lockdown since Tuesday.

A makeshift hospital was set up in a sports auditorium and doctors have been mobi-



People wearing face masks rest outside a closed store in Mexico City on Saturday. AFP

## France starts testing travellers from 16 nations

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
PARIS, 1 AUGUST

Travellers entering France from 16 countries where the coronavirus is circulating widely are having to undergo virus tests upon arrival at French airports and ports.

French Prime Minister Jean Castex announced last month that the tests would be required starting Aug 1 for the arriving passengers.

France is allowing in from the listed countries unless they present proof of a negative test done within 72 hours of their departure. Those who test positive in France must

quarantine for 14 days.

France is not permitting general travel to and from the 16 countries, which include the United States and Brazil. The testing requirement therefore only applies to people entering under limited circumstances—French citizens who live in these countries or citizens of these countries with an established residence in France, Castex has said.

Daniel Court was tested at Paris-Charles de Gaulle Airport after coming in from the French Riviera city of Nice. He acknowledged not loving the experience. It's very fast,

but I have to say that it's not very pleasant. It is surprising. But we have to do it," Court said. Another passenger who got tested after landing at Paris' main airport, Nadia Vusik of Belarus, said she thought the new policy made sense.

The government previously made mask-wearing mandatory in all indoor public spaces. The French government has so far ruled out imposing another nationwide lockdown after the one that brought the country to a standstill for nearly two months between March and May.

lized from other cities to help. I want to be tested so I can stop worrying if I have the virus or not, said Pham Thuy Hoa, a banking official who returned to the capital from Da Nang.

We must be responsible for the entire community.

India recorded its steepest spike of 57,118 new cases in the past 24 hours, taking its coronavirus caseload close to 1.7 million, with July alone accounting for nearly 1.1 million infections.

The country's Civil Aviation Ministry delayed resumption of international flights by another month until 31 August.

But it will continue to allow several international carriers from the United States, Europe and the Middle East to operate special flights to evacuate stranded nationals.

The global pandemic has impacted nearly every aspect of this year's Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca, with as few as 1,000 pilgrims already

residing in Saudi Arabia taking part, down from 2.5 million last year.

Poverty brought on by the pandemic is making it harder for many to join in the four-day Eid al-Adha, or Feast of Sacrifice, in which Muslims slaughter livestock and distribute the meat to the poor.

I could hardly buy food for my family, Somali civil servant Abdishakur Dahir said. We are just surviving for now. Life is getting tougher by the

day. The Saudi Health Ministry said there have been no cases of Covid-19 among this year's pilgrims. All were tested, their movements monitored with electronic wristbands and required to be quarantined before and after.

In the U.S., Hurricane Isaias' imminent arrival forced the closure of some outdoor testing sites even as Florida reached a new daily high in deaths.

We had to put safety first, Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Giménez said at an online news conference Friday.

In Utah, the Salt Lake City School District Board of Education announced that its schools will start the year with all online-only classes in response to an increasing number of confirmed cases in the city. Just days after public schools around Indiana reopened their doors, at least one student and one school staff member in districts around Indianapolis have tested positive for the virus.

The debate over school openings came as Dr. Anthony Fauci dismissed a tweet by President Donald Trump claiming the US global lead in coronavirus cases is because of increased testing. Fauci said the scale of the US outbreak is the result of multiple factors, including some states opening up too quickly and disregarding federal guidelines.

On Friday, the head of the World Health Organization predicted the effects of the pandemic will be felt for decades to come. Most of the world's people remain susceptible to this virus, even in areas that have experienced severe outbreaks, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in London.

Although vaccine development is happening at record speed, we must learn to live with this virus and we must fight it with the tools that we have."



governments, help for the poor and funding for schools and colleges to address the pandemic. Without action, the unemployment benefit ran out

on Friday and both the House and Senate have left Washington. "Clearly they did not understand the gravity of the situation," Pelosi said. She said a short-term extension only makes sense if the two sides are close to a deal.

Why don't we just get the job done? she asked.

An aide familiar with the

talks said Pelosi rejected an administration offer of a four-month extension of the benefit at \$400 per week, combined with additional provisions for particularly hard-hit businesses and a shield against lawsuits for businesses, schools and other entities that reopen as the pandemic continues to rage. The aide spoke on condition of anonymity.

Pelosi, brimming with confidence, offered a tutorial on negotiating on Friday.

There are two things to remember. One is the person you're negotiating with has to want something for the American people, Pelosi said. And they have to know you will walk if you don't get a good enough agreement.

Senate Republicans had been fighting to trim back the \$600 jobless benefit in the next coronavirus package, but their resolve weakened as the expiration of the popular benefit neared and as Trump undercut their position by signaling he wants to keep the full \$600 benefit for now.

# Trump, GOP soften on opposition to \$600 per week jobless benefit

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
WASHINGTON, 1 AUGUST

The White House and its GOP allies appear to be retreating from their opposition to a \$600-per-week supplemental unemployment benefit that has propped up the economy and family budgets but expired on Friday.

President Donald Trump is eager to extend the benefit, undercutting his GOP allies on Capitol Hill who have spent considerable effort devising an alternative that could unite Republicans.

The unemployment insurance is a principal element as talks continue on a Covid-19 relief Bill, which is expected to grow considerably from a \$1 trillion-plus GOP draft released this week.

Top Democrats announced a meeting with administration representatives for Saturday morning after Thursday night talks at the Capitol failed to produce a breakthrough.

The two sides took their case to the media on Friday morning, with White House chief of staff Mark Meadows speaking to reporters on short notice at the exact moment House Speaker Nancy Pelosi appeared at her weekly news conference.

Meadows accused Democrats of refusing to negotiate, saying Trump has instructed him to be aggressive and forward-leaning in trying to extend the supplemental jobless benefit.

Democrats have made zero offers over the last three days, said Meadows, an inexperienced negotiator and former tea party lawmaker. He said Democrats are willing to play politics" and are acting like they hold all the cards.

The White House on Thursday offered a one-week extension of the \$600 weekly unemployment benefit, top Democrats said, but Pelosi rejected it, saying it needs to be addressed as part of a far more sweeping bill that would deliver aid to state and local

# Florida teen arrested as mastermind of Twitter hack

ASSOCIATED PRESS

MIAMI, 1 AUGUST

A Florida teen was identified on Friday as the mastermind of a scheme earlier this month that commanded Twitter accounts of prominent politicians, celebrities and technology moguls and scammed people around the globe out of more than \$100,000 in Bitcoin. Two other men were also charged in the case.

Graham Ivan Clark, 17, was arrested on Friday in Tampa, where the Hillsborough State Attorney's Office will prosecute him as an adult. He faces 30 felony charges, according to a news release.

Two men accused of benefiting from the hack - Mason Sheppard, 19, of Bogart Regis, U.K., and Nima Fazeli, 22, of Orlando - were charged separately in California federal court.

**In one of the most high-profile security breaches in recent years, bogus tweets were sent out on 15 July from the accounts of Barack Obama, Joe Biden, Mike Bloomberg and a number of tech billionaires**

In one of the most high-profile security breaches in recent years, bogus tweets were sent out on 15 July from the accounts of Barack Obama, Joe Biden, Mike Bloomberg and a number of tech billionaires

including Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos, Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates and Tesla CEO Elon Musk.

The tweets offered to send \$2,000 for every \$1,000 sent to an anonymous Bitcoin address.

Twitter has said the hacker gained access to a company dashboard that manages accounts by using social engineering and spear-phishing smartphones to obtain credentials from a small number of Twitter employees "to gain access to our internal systems.

## BRAVING THE ODDS



Devotees arrive under the rain at the Badshahi mosque to offer prayers during the Eid al-Adha, in Lahore on Saturday. AFP

# Portland protest strives for peace as Fed forces drawn down

PORLAND, 1 AUGUST

More than a thousand people showed up in downtown Portland early Saturday to peacefully protest, about three days after the announcement that the presence of U.S. agents there would be reduced - a deal that Oregon officials hope will continue to ease tensions as the city tries to move on from months of chaotic nightly protests.

Friday's overnight protest mimicked that of Thursday, which was the first time in weeks that demonstrations ended without any major violence or arrests.

The change in tone outside a federal courthouse that's become ground zero in clashes between demonstrators and federal agents came after the U.S. government began drawing down its forces in the liberal city under a deal between Democratic Gov. Kate Brown and the Trump administration.

As of midnight on Saturday, no federal agents had emerged from the courthouse, which has been the center of protests for weeks, and there was no noticeable law enforcement presence surrounding the area.

The fence that has separated protesters and US agents stationed at the courthouse was decorated with balloons and upside down American flags sewn together with "BLM(Black Lives Matter)" painted across.

At one point in the night a small firework was shot over the fence. As it sizzled out on its own, protesters pleaded with others to remain peaceful. Just after midnight, the crowd had grown to over 1,000 people who remained outside chanting "Black Lives Matter" and shouting the names of Black people killed by police.

In a tweet, President Donald Trump Friday night reiterated that the Department of Homeland Security "is not leaving Portland until local police complete cleanup of Anarchists and Agitators!"

# Joe Biden's search for a running mate enters final stretch

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON, 1 AUGUST

As Joe Biden nears the announcement of his vice presidential choice, the top contenders and their advocates are making final appeals.

The campaign hasn't finalized a date for naming a running mate, but three people who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the plans said a public announcement likely wouldn't happen before the week of August 10.

That's one week before Democrats will hold their convention to officially nominate Biden as their presidential nominee.

Biden said in May that he hoped to name his pick around August 1 and told reporters this week that he would have a choice in the first week of August. He notably stopped short of saying when he would announce that choice.

Running mates are often announced on the eve of a convention. As he prepares to



make his choice, a committee established to vet possible running mates has provided Biden with briefing materials. Biden will likely soon begin one-on-one conversations with those under consideration, which could be the most consequential part of the process for a presidential candidate who values personal connections.

The leading contenders include California Sen. Kamala Harris, California Rep. Karen Bass and Obama national security adviser Susan Rice. The deliberations remain fluid, however, and the campaign has reviewed nearly a dozen possible running mates.

For Biden, this is crunch time. After all the vetting, all the investigations into the prospective nominees, it's now up to Joe. It's personal, said former New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson, who was vetted for vice president in 2008. It's now about his gut feeling. Representatives for Biden declined to comment

for this story.

The selection amounts to the most significant choice Biden has confronted in his nearly five-decade political career. He has pledged to select a woman and is facing calls to choose the first Black woman to compete on a presidential ticket. Given the historic significance of the moment, some are urging

Biden not to let the announcement linger too long.

Mysense is that the VP himself, having been through this process, is aware of and mindful of not letting people hang out there too long, said Democratic strategist Karen Finney.

There certainly seems to be a bit of a media frenzy, and I think we have to be aware that at a point, it becomes unfair

to the candidates being considered." As a decision looms, the camps are jockeying for position.

Harris' allies mobilized this week after Politico reported that the co-chair of the vetting committee, former Connecticut Sen. Chris Dodd, was concerned about Harris' tough debate stage performance and that she hasn't

expressed regret.

Several California elected officials and labor leaders initiated a call with the vetting team to emphasize that Harris has strong support among labor and political leaders in her home state. The call was organized by Lt. Gov. Eleni Kounalakis and included the mayors of Oakland, Long Beach and Stockton and former Gov. Gray Davis.

A group of us really felt we needed to organize and speak out and correct the record because she has tremendous support, Kounalakis said.

Beyond emphasising their strong relationships with Harris, they also pushed back against the idea that Harris wouldn't be a loyal partner.

Harris, while not directly addressing her vice presidential prospects, told a group of young Black women Friday that it's common for Black women to face resistance when they exercise their power. There will be a resistance to your ambition. There will

be people who say to you: 'You are out of your lane,' " she said during the digital summit.

They are burdened by only having the capacity to see what has always been instead of what can be.

...I've had that experience my entire career." Biden has sought feedback on his picks from former President Obama, who has provided advice but has insisted the choice is his to make, according to a person who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the private conversations.

Biden allies say his wife, Jill, and sister, Valerie Biden Owens, are likely to play a key role in the decision, as they have with many of Biden's biggest political decisions throughout his career.

On Friday



We estimate that there are hundreds of thousands of people stranded in the mainland or overseas.

HONG KONG CHIEF EXECUTIVE CARRIE LAM

ON THE POSTPONEMENT OF ELECTIONS, SAYING THE RIGHTS OF VOTERS STRANDED OVERSEAS NEED TO BE CONSIDERED

The Sunday Statesman  
NEW DELHI, 02 AUGUST 2020

## Want to push for boost in China-Nepal ties'

Chinese President Xi also asserted that he wanted to bring greater benefits to the peoples of the two neighbouring countries

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
BEIJING, 1 AUGUST



**C**hinese President Xi Jinping on Saturday said he wants to push for continued advancement of ties with Nepal amidst Beijing's sustained efforts to shore up pro-China Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli's grip on power in the backdrop of intra-party feud in the ruling communist party.

In an exchange of congratulatory messages with his Nepalese counterpart Bidhya Devi Bhandari on the 65th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, Xi asserted that he was ready to work to bring greater benefits to the two peoples of the two neighbouring countries.

The Chinese President said that he attaches great importance to the development of China-Nepal relations and is willing to work with his Nepali counterpart Bhandari to push

said the two sides have stood together through thick and thin in the fight against the COVID-19 and have written a new chapter of friendship between China and Nepal, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang and his Nepalese counterpart Oli too exchanged greetings. "Highlighting the deep-rooted cordial friendship since ages, the Prime Minister (Oli) underlined that Nepal has consistently maintained the One China Policy" and China has always respected Nepal's sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence, Nepal's Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

Nepal's Minister for Foreign Affairs Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, in his message to China's State Councilor and Minister of Foreign Affairs Wang Yi, appreciated Wang's role in strengthening the bilateral ties, it said.

Wang expressed his "willingness to work together with

Gyawali to strengthen communication and cooperation, implement the important consensus reached between the leaders and make a positive contribution to the development of China-Nepal Strategic Partnership of Cooperation featuring ever-lasting friendship for development and prosperity, the statement said.

Nepal and China established their diplomatic relations on August 1, 1955.

China's political profile in Nepal has been on the rise in the recent years with billions of dollars of investments under Beijing's multi-billion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), including the building of the Trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network.

Besides the investments, China's ambassador to Kathmandu Hou Yanqi has made open efforts to garner support for Oli, who faced a massive rebellion in his party headed by co-chair of the ruling Nepal Communist Party (NCP) Push-

pa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda'. Hou met Prachanda and other leaders seeking their backing for Oli but the rebellion against the prime minister has not subsided.

China attaches high importance to Oli continuing in power as during his brief tenure in 2016, he widened China-Nepal ties by signing the transit trade treaty with Beijing to reduce the dependence of his land-locked country on India.

Nepal's ambassador to China Mahendra Bahadur Pandey, in an article published in the state-run China Daily on Friday, said that the cooperation under the BRI is of great significance for both Nepal and China.

Our leaders stressed the need to intensify implementation of the memorandum of understanding on cooperation under the BRI under the framework of the Trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network. The construction of tun-

nels from Jilong in Tibet to Kathmandu, development of the three North-South corridors in Nepal-Koshi, Gandaki and Karnali - and the Nepal-China electric power cooperation plan are some of the landmark projects in the areas of infrastructure and industry that were agreed to be initiated in Nepal during President Xi's state visit to Nepal last year, he said.

Last month, Oli alleged that India was conspiring with his political rivals to throw him out of power.

The internal feud in the NCP intensified after Prachanda and senior leader Madhav Nepal asked for Oli's resignation following his controversial remarks against India as well as his autocratic style of functioning.

Oli and Prachanda factions are currently engaged in holding internal consultations, though the date for the formal meeting of the powerful Standing Committee is yet to be fixed.

last month after the central government in Beijing imposed a new national security law on the city. The move raised fears that Hong Kong's freedoms and local autonomy are being taken away.

Germany's Maas described the election decisions as a further infringement of the rights of Hong Kong's citizens. The Chinese Embassy said the actions were justified and consistent with the one country, two systems framework under which Hong Kong, a former British colony, was handed over to Chinese control in 1997. The German side's erroneous remarks on Hong Kong and the suspension of the extradition treaty with Hong Kong are a serious breach of international law and basic norms governing international relations and gross violations of China's internal affairs, the embassy statement said.

Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States also have suspended their extradition treaties with Hong Kong

## China condemns Germany's HK extradition suspension

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
BERLIN, 1 AUGUST

China has condemned Germany's decision to suspend its extradition agreement with Hong Kong, accusing Berlin of a serious breach of international law.

Germany's foreign minister announced the suspension Friday following the disqualification of 12 pro-democracy candidates from legislative elections and a subsequent decision to postpone the elections. Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam cited a worsening coronavirus outbreak in the semi-autonomous Chinese territory in postponing the vote.

The Chinese Embassy in Berlin expressed strong indignation and firm opposition to the wrong remarks of German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas in a statement posted on its website and dated Friday.

The Chinese Embassy in Berlin expressed strong indignation and firm opposition to the wrong remarks of German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas in a statement posted on its website and dated Friday.

Media mogul Rupert Murdoch's son leaves News Corp board

The exact nature of the disagreements was not detailed by James Murdoch. But he had previously criticised News Corp outlets, which include the *Wall Street Journal*, for climate change coverage

NEW YORK, 1 AUGUST

James Murdoch, the younger son of American media mogul Rupert Murdoch, has resigned from the board of News Corporation citing "disagreements over editorial content", it was reported on Saturday.

James Murdoch informed the board in a brief letter on Friday that he resigned as he disagreed with "certain editorial content" published by the company and "certain other strategic decisions", reports Xinhua news agency.

He said that his resignation would take effect immediately. The exact nature of the disagreements was not detailed. But Murdoch has previously criticised News Corp outlets, which include the *Wall Street Journal*, for climate change coverage, the BBC reported. Rupert Murdoch and his other son Lachlan, also a co-chairman, wished James well in a joint statement. "We're grateful to James for his many years of service to the company," the BBC quoted the statement as saying.

"We wish him the very best in his future endeavours." Born in London in 1972, James is the youngest of Rupert Murdoch's three children from his marriage to Anna Torv, the others being sister Elisabeth and brother Lachlan. He was formerly chief executive of 21st Century Fox before Walt Disney bought most of its assets last year. News Corp also owns *The Times*, *The Sun* and *The Sunday Times* in the UK, as well as a stable of Australian newspapers, including *The Australian*, *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Herald Sun*. IANS

## HK leader Carrie Lam defends election delay due to Covid-19

CLAIRE HUANG  
HONG KONG, 1 AUGUST

**Mrs Lam also expressed hope that the infighting in the Legco would end in the coming year so that work would continue as per normal during the "vacuum period" or the duration that the current government term is extended by.**

ed for Sept 6, but has been postponed by a whole year to Sept 5, 2021.

Mrs Lam, whose public support levels are at all-time low, pointed out that Hong Kong has no overseas voting or electronic voting arrangements.

"If we hope to better deal with future unexpected events that make it impossible to carry out the usual election process, we should seriously consider, for example, in the case of Singapore, overseas voting,"

she said. Mrs Lam also expressed hope that the infighting in the Legco would end in the coming year so that work would continue as per normal during the "vacuum period" or the duration that the current government term is extended by.

"Some legislators have adopted a resistance strategy. For example, it was recently pointed out that if the opposition seizes more than half of the Legco, no policy will be passed - an indiscriminate move to block everything."

"This position of complete resistance is disadvantageous to the public." Asked if she was worried about being sanctioned by Western countries, Mrs Lam said these countries have used the postponing of elections as a pretext to attack Hong Kong but her administration has a response plan.

The controversial move throws up questions of legitimacy as to a lack of mandate

"because voters did not vote them in for more than four years," veteran political watcher Associate Professor Sing Ming told The Straits Times.

"If there's no legislature at all and the government would legislate, that would become even more absurd because that violates the Basic Law."

For either arrangement, the procedural legitimacy of any provisional legislature will be undermined," he added.

In a separate interview earlier in the day with the local Commercial Radio, Mrs Lam expressed regret over the bungling of the full-dine-in ban.

She said she and her team felt very embarrassed after backpedalling on the decision to ban dining-in at eateries completely.

Blue-collar workers had to lunch by the roads, at construction sites and other outdoor public areas on Wednesday and Thursday, before eateries were allowed to serve dine-in customers again on

Friday. The government has been struggling to contain the Covid-19 outbreak as it worsens the past month, piling pressure on the city's healthcare system and testing capabilities.

On Saturday, there were 125 new infections, of which 124 were local transmissions. This brings the tally to 3,397, including 31 deaths.

And in a sign of further cracks within the government, Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) David Leung, who has been a prosecutor for 25 years, has resigned, citing differences with Justice Secretary Teresa Cheng.

In an email sent to his colleagues, Mr Leung said he had been sidelined on matters relating to the national security law and would leave his post at the end of the year. At the Friday briefing on election day, Ms Cheng confirmed Mr Leung's exit and declined to comment further. THE STRAITS TIMES/ANN

## South Korea arrests leader of church with big virus cluster

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
SEOUL, AUG 1

South Korean prosecutors arrested the elderly leader of a secretive religious sect Saturday as part of an investigation into allegations that the church hampered the government's anti-virus response after thousands of worshippers were infected in February and March.

Prosecutors in the central city of Suwon have been questioning 88-year-old Lee Man-hee, chairman of the Shincheonji Church of Jesus, over charges that the church hid some members and underreported gatherings to avoid broader quarantines.

The Suwon District Court early Saturday granted prosecutors' request to arrest Lee over concerns that he could temper with evidence.

Lee and his church have steadfastly denied the accusa-

tions, saying they're cooperating with health authorities.

Its spokesperson, Kim Young-eun, said the church will do its best so that the truth is clearly proved in court.

More than 5,200 of the South Korea's 14,336 Covid-19 cases have been linked to the church so far.

Its branch in the southern city of Daegu emerged as the biggest cluster after infections spiked in late February. Health authorities used an aggressive test-and-quarantine program to contain the outbreak in Daegu and nearby towns by April, but the country has seen a resurgence of the virus in the Seoul metropolitan area since May. South Korea's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Saturday reported 31 newly confirmed cases. At least 23 of the were tied to international arrivals.

## Iran says it had detained leader of lesser-known California-based exile group

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
TEHRAN, AUG 1

**It remains unclear how Sharmahd, whom Iran accused of running the opposition group's Tondar militant wing, ended up detained by intelligence officials.**

**Requests for comment to the Glendora-based Kingdom Assembly of Iran were not immediately answered and a telephone number for the group no longer worked.**

Iranian intelligence operatives in the past have used family members and other tricks to lure targets back to Iran or friendly countries to be captured. An alleged Iranian government operative who allegedly tried to hire a hitman to kill Sharmahd disappeared in 2010 before facing trial in California, likely having returned to Iran.

While overshadowed by other exiled opposition groups, Iran reportedly brought up the Kingdom Assembly multiple times while negotiating the terms of the 2015 deal, which saw Tehran limit its enrichment of uranium in exchange for the lifting of economic sanctions.

A statement attributed to Tondar claimed the assassination of an Iranian nuclear scientist in 2010 by a remote-control bomb, though it later said it wasn't responsible.

Suspicion long has fallen on Israel for a string of assassinations targeting scientists amid concerns about Iran's nuclear program, which the West fears could be used to develop a nuclear bomb.

Iran has maintained its program is for peaceful purposes. Sharmahd's reported arrest comes as tensions remain inflamed by President Trump's 2018 decision to unilaterally withdraw America from the nuclear deal.

### CAUTIOUS TOURISTS



People visit a garden with a Buddha statue at the complex of the 14th century Wat Yai Chai Mongkhon temple in Ayutthaya, north of Bangkok, as authorities reopened sites to tourists following lockdowns to halt the spread of the Covid-19

AFP

## Thousands in Russian Far East protest area governor's arrest

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
MOSCOW, 1 AUGUST

Thousands of demonstrators rallied Saturday in the Russian Far East city of Khabarovsk (*in photo*) to protest the arrest of the regional governor, continuing a three-week wave of opposition that has challenged the Kremlin.

Khabarovsk Krai Gov Sergei Furgal has been in a Moscow jail since his July 9 arrest on charges of involvement in murders that occurred before his political career started. He has denied the charges.

Protesters in Khabarovsk see the charges against Furgal as unsubstantiated and are demanding that his trial take place in his home city, 6,100 kilometers (3,800 miles) east of the Russian capital.

His supporters have held daily protests, with largest turnouts on weekends. The latest demonstration attracted about 10,000 people. But police said the crowd was about 3,500. Unlike in Moscow, where police usually move quickly to disperse unsanctioned

opposition protests, authorities haven't interfered with the unauthorized demonstrations in Khabarovsk, apparently expecting them to fizzle out.

Authorities suspect Furgal of involvement in slayings of several businessmen in 2004 and 2005, when he was a businessman with interests focusing on timber and metals. A lawmaker on the nationalist Liberal Democratic Party ticket, Furgal won the 2018 regional gubernatorial election even though he had refrained from campaigning and publicly supported his Kremlin-backed rival.

His victory was a setback to the main Kremlin party. Unit-

ed Russia, which also lost its control over the regional legislature.

During his time in office, Furgal earned a reputation as a people's governor, cutting his own salary, ordering the sale of an expensive yacht that the previous administration had bought and offering new benefits to residents.

Russian President Vladimir Putin named Mikhail Degtyaryov, a federal lawmaker who is also a member of the Liberal Democratic Party, to replace Furgal, a choice that was apparently intended to assuage local anger. Degtyaryov has not yet faced the protesters.

## US airlines, unions pin hopes for more payroll cash on politics

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
WASHINGTON, 1 AUGUST

With tens of thousands of airline workers facing layoffs this fall, labour groups are pushing Congress for more federal money to keep them on the payroll until next spring.

The unions have gained significant support among Democrats. They hope that the prospect of mass layoffs weeks before a pivotal election will sway some Republican votes.

The airline industry has been battered by the virus pandemic. In March, companies got \$32 billion to help cover payroll costs for six months in exchange for not laying off workers.

The money and the ban on layoffs both end October 1, meaning there could be large-scale job cuts less than five

weeks before the November 3 election. Ultimately the White House will be responsible for that, and so will the 23 Republican senators who are up for re-election, said Sara Nelson, president of the Association of Flight Attendants.

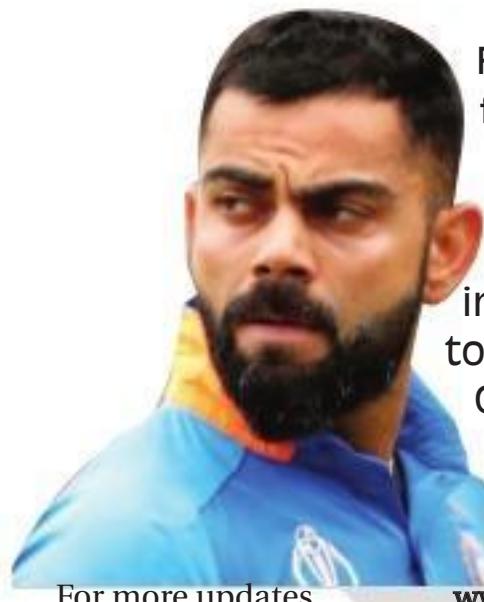
I don't believe that's a political risk that anyone is willing to take. But approval is far from certain. Airlines are already downsizing - persuading thousands of workers to take voluntary buyouts or early retirement. And they have lined up billions of dollars in private borrowing, giving them a better chance of surviving a long slump in travel.

The CEO of Southwest Airlines said he supports an extension of federal dollars for airline payrolls, but he doesn't see the same urgency in

Washington. Back in the spring, there was broad support from Congress, the administration and even the president," Gary Kelly said. "This time around, that is not the case.

Kelly made the comments in an employee video after a union representing flight attendants and other Southwest employees asked him to publicly support the payroll aid extension. Thirteen airline unions have joined to lobby Congress for a six-month extension of the payroll provision. Of the total, \$25 billion would go to passenger airlines. Major airlines support the extension, but they are keeping a low profile. Union and airline representatives fear that if the big airlines openly lobby for the money, it could be portrayed as a bailout.

Airlines for America, the trade group for the biggest US carriers,



For more updates

**KOHLI'S BEST**  
Former opener Gautam Gambhir has rated Virat Kohli's (*in photo*) stroke-filled 183 against Pakistan in a 2012 Asia Cup match as one of the greatest innings from the Indian captain across three formats. Chasing a big target of 330 in Dhaka, Kohli smashed 183 off just 148 balls, with 22 fours and one six, to guide India to a six wicket win. "First of all we were chasing 330, then India was 0/1, and then scoring 183 out of the 330 runs, that too against Pakistan, and that time, he was not that experienced too," said Gambhir on "Best of Asia Cup watch along" show on Star Sports.

[www.thestatesman.com](http://www.thestatesman.com)**THUMBNAILS**

**Shubhankar misses cut at Hero Open:** India's Shubhankar Sharma tried hard but could not make the cut at the Hero Open in Birmingham, missing out on weekend action in his first start since the return of competitive golf on the European Tour. The 24-year-old, who shot 73 in the first round, seemed to have put himself way off the cut line with three bogeys on the trot around the turn as he dropped shots on ninth, 10th and 11th holes at which point he was four over for the tournament. The cut looked likely at two-under.



**Irfan Pathan's interest:** Former India all-rounder Irfan Pathan could be one of the biggest attractions in the inaugural Lanka Premier League (LPL) as he is among the 70 foreign players who have expressed interest in competing in the event starting August 28. According to a report in ESPNcricinfo, Pathan, who announced his retirement in January this year, will now be "put in a player draft unless one of the five franchises choose him to be a marquee player."

**Botham made member of House of Lords:** Legendary England all-rounder Ian Botham has been made a member of the House of Lords of the British Parliament. The 64-year-old Botham, a former captain, was among 36 new peers announced by the government to join the unelected House. Botham, who played 102 Test matches for England between 1977 and 1992, is a prominent Brexit supporter. He was knighted in 2007 in recognition of his services to charity and cricket.

**Unfinished business:** India's ODI skipper Mithali Raj says she is focussed on winning the World Cup next year to complete some unfinished business and finish her career on a blaze of glory. "In 2013, when India hosted the world cup, we didn't even qualify for the super six stage. I was hurt and quite disappointed," she said on Star Sports 1 Telugu show Girl Power-Sarileru Manakevvuru. "I thought let me give a try in 2017 World Cup. Then I really worked hard for that World Cup. As a player, as a captain, I did a lot of homework. I thought when we were in the finals, if we win the finals, then I will retire."

**Chhetri voted AFC Asian Cup 2019's 'favourite player':** Indian captain Sunil Chhetri was voted as the favourite player of the AFC Asian Cup 2019, the Asian Football Confederation said on Saturday.

Chhetri edged out Eldor Shomurodov of Uzbekistan in the final by a 51-49 percent of votes in a fan poll conducted by the AFC. "19 days, 561,856 votes The #Asian-Cup2019 favourite player has been decided. Congratulations Sunil Chhetri!" said the AFC in its tweet announcing the result.

**South Africa's tours of West Indies and Sri Lanka postponed:** Cricket South Africa's (CSA) director of cricket Graeme Smith on Saturday said the Proteas' tours of West Indies and Sri Lanka have been postponed indefinitely owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. Former captain Smith added that the national team is expected to be back in action in November. Last week, Cricket West Indies chief executive Johnny Grave had expressed his board's interest to host South Africa for either a five-match T20I series or a two-Test rubber in September.

**'Calcutta Football League could be a Covid - 19 victim this year'****STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, 1 AUGUST**

For all the media noise around Mohun Bagan, after their merger with ATK, and East Bengal, whose reported search for a new investor with a bottomless purse is at the core of a plethora of speculative projections, it is quite doubtful that the city will witness a lot of football action this year, an Indian Football Association insider told The Statesman here today.

IFA chief Ajit Banerjee said in a nuanced riposte that things were really bad now because of the coronavirus but local football would get going once it was possible to make a move in a safer setting. He also spoke of a medical panel having been set up in view of the new global reality, claiming personally to have recommended the inclusion in it of a virologist.

"Local football? Certainly not in the calendar year, and quite

possibly not in the financial one either," said a well-placed source, insisting on anonymity, and adding: "The pandemic, here at least, has supplied the IFA with a goodish excuse for doing nothing at all. The highs sit tight waiting for the government to tell them what to do. They will let the ball start rolling if the green light is given by Nabanna, but won't take the initiative even to organise football-centric webinars or coach-player online interactions,

things which are being done by virtually all governing authorities of sport at state as well as national levels. The opportunity to do these things is new but open to all today. Every institution is trying to make the most of it when there are no matches or even a schedule."

The source, with decades of experience in Indian sport administration, conceded that it was not really "desirable" for the Calcutta Football League to kick off in all seriousness with

the coronavirus continuing to play havoc, but laid a special emphasis on the charge that, "truth to tell, Covid - 19 is in a way a godsend for officials who simply didn't want to lift the little finger on the left hand."

Asked if the IFA's inaction could be chalked up to a lack of money, the source replied: "Sport associations in this land, cricket ones excepted, have never been flush with funds. You manage to do things despite the

constraint. Even the smaller disciplines indicate a basic, honest commitment, linking players with coaches and trying to reach out to the Press and the people. The IFA is trying nothing like that. It suffers from a poverty of thoughts."

Banerjee said that the allegations were less than truthful. "Yes, it's true that the IFA offices open only thrice a week nowadays, but, given the way things are, I've said only two days would suffice. Not many people come

in anyway. Everyone is too scared to move about. We do meet, though, honouring all health-related protocols, including physical distancing. We're planning new things all right but there's this thing about our country: our means are very modest. We're much less than what's called the lower middle class. A certain reliance on governments can't really be got away from. And yes, if we're allowed to get back to it, we certainly will."

**IPL GC agenda: Members to get update on govt green light****PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 1 AUGUST**

**While the BCCI is all set to shift the league to the United Arab Emirates, it is learnt that status of government's clearance is top-most in the 10-point agenda of the Brijesh Patel-led governing council.**

Aspect will be the SOP that will be handed to the franchises for Monday's discussion where they can raise their concerns.

The key points on IPL agenda for Sunday's meeting areas follows:

1) Approval of Minutes of previous meetings-- The approval of minutes of three previous GC meetings.

2) Awaiting Government Approval-- The BCCI is yet to get mandatory clearances from the Home and External Affairs Ministries before they can set the ball rolling. It is also understood that a formal approval from the UAE government is also awaited which will be procured by Emirates Cricket Board.

3) Schedule, Duration -- The tournament will be either of 51 days starting from September 19 or 53 days if the final is pushed back to September 10, which gives broadcasters to cash in on Diwali week.

4) Chinese Sponsorship deals in IPL to stay for now--

Vivo is the title sponsors while PayTM, Dream 11, BYJU's and Swiggy have Chinese investments. Due to the prevailing tension between India and China, the matter will be up for discussion. In all probabilities, Vivo will complete the present contract which fetches BCCIs 440 crore a year as getting a new sponsor in the eleventh hour is difficult.

5) Standard Operating Procedure -- The SOP is around a 240-page document that has been prepared and will be shared with the franchises. It includes all health safety related measures including the number of COVID tests that will be conducted and how the bio-bubble will be created.

There will be directives on Squad Strength (likely to be capped at 40, including players, support staff and management team). While BCCIs SOP can be upgraded by the fran-

chises, they in no way can downgrade it. It has been learnt that BCCI will let franchises decide on whether they would allow families (wives, partners, children) to travel with the players or not. "The BCCI will only negotiate with the hotels and try to provide them with discount rates but it's the franchise that needs to create the bubble as per SOP."

6) WILL IPL GC members get to travel-- Normally, the IPL Governing Council members travel to various venues-- whether India or abroad during the tournament but there will be discussions as to whether in these times with health safety being paramount, the members should be allowed to travel to watch the matches or not.

"There are a few senior citizens in the IPL GC and one needs to put a lot of thought whether travelling will be risky or not," the official said.

7) Replacement Player -- There will be discussion on how to procure replacement players in case players in the original squad are unable to travel. Like South Africa's borders are closed for the time being and likes of Quinton de Kock, Kagiso Rabada, Imran Tahir and AB de Villiers are important for their respective franchises.

8) ACU -- Currently, BCCIs ACU unit has eight full-time officers but even then, they would require more workforce with each team needing one integrity officer and also the hotels where the teams are staying need to be monitored as there would be other guests too. "There is a possibility that BCCI can hire from ICC's ACU team and pay a fee for their services," the official further stated.

9) BCCI's own medical unit -- There will be discussion on whether BCCI will have their own medical unit travelling or prepare a team of medical practitioners based out of the United Arab Emirates.

10) Meeting with experts who devised ECB's bio-bubble -- The BCCI brass will also be meeting the team of experts assigned by the England and Wales Cricket Board to create the bio-secure environment for the just concluded series against West Indies along with upcoming one against Pakistan and the ongoing against Ireland.

**Decided against pulling out of 2008 Australia tour to set example, says Kumble****PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 1 AUGUST**

Former captain Anil Kumble (*in photo*) says pulling out of the 2007-08 Australia tour following the controversial Sydney Test could have been an "acceptable" option but his side continued the series to set an example by winning the remaining matches under trying circumstances.

The Sydney Test in January 2008 was marred by the infamous Monkeygate scandal where off-spinner Harbhajan Singh was handed a three-match ban by the ICC for allegedly racially abusing Andrew Symonds. India had appealed against the decision and there were also talks about a possible pulling out of the tour.

Harbhajan was eventually let off with a fine of 50 percent of his match fees by New

Zealand High Court judge John Hansen. "You know as a captain you're generally tuned to take decisions on the field. Here I was faced with something which was off the field, to take a decision in the larger interest of the game," the legendary spinner told R Ashwin in his YouTube show 'DRS with Ash'. The 49-year-old Kumble, the country's highest Test wicket-taker with 619 scalps from 132 matches, also made it clear that he felt Harbhajan was "wronged" by the decision of the ICC. "We had to obviously be

together as a team but the challenge was that there was a lot of talk about the team wanting to come back at that point in time, and leave the tour and come back. Yes, you know, probably (people) would have accepted that the Indian team was wronged and that's why they came back," Kumble said: "I think as a captain, or as a team, we had gone there to win the series. Unfortunately, with the first two results not going our way, the best result could have been a drawn series because two more Test matches remained and I just wanted to rally around the team. "We got around as a unit and then we sort of took a decision to continue and make sure that we go on and win the next couple of matches because that would be the best message that we can give back our fans."

**Ronaldo ends Serie A campaign as second-highest scorer****INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE  
TURIN, 1 AUGUST**

Juventus hostshot striker Cristiano Ronaldo (*in photo*) saw his dreams of winning the golden boot end on Saturday after it was announced that he won't take part in the team's final Serie A match.

Recently-crowned league champions Juventus will take on Roma in their final clash of the season and the Turin giants announced the squad on their social media handle, which didn't include Ronaldo. This means Ronaldo will end the season with 31 goals, four behind Lazio's Ciro Immobile, who has a chance to extend his lead in his team's final league game against Napoli. Juventus manager Maurizio Sarri had already hinted at resting Ronaldo for the final league clash with an eye on their Round of 16

Champions League second leg clash against Lyon.

"We'll assess [who will play] today and tomorrow morning, depending on who needs to rest and who is fit to play," Sarri told reporters on Friday as per Goal.com. "Between tomorrow and next Friday there will be a big difference in terms of mentalities. We'll need to be good at recovering all energies possible. "Let's see how Cristiano feels for tomorrow (Saturday), he's one of the players that played the most in the entire season." Immobile, meanwhile, also topped the European charts as no one in the big four leagues scored more than him this term. Robert Lewandowski scored 34 goals this Bundesliga campaign while Jamie Vardy and Lionel Messi scored 23 and 25 goals in Premier League and LaLiga respectively.

Paris St Germain completed a domestic treble as they beat Olympique Lyonnais 6-5 on penalties to lift the French League Cup on Friday with the match ending in a 0-0 stalemate after regular and extra

time. Second-half substitute Pablo Sarabia scored PSG's final penalty in the shootout after goalkeeper Keylor Navas had saved Bertrand Traore's spot kick to give the Ligue 1 champions and French Cup winners their ninth League Cup trophy.

It was the last roar for the competition, which was founded in 1995, as the French Professional Football League (LFP) decided in September to scrap it as of next season until further notice.

The LFP had failed to secure a broadcaster for the 2020-2024 period but reserved the right to relaunch the competition in the future. Lyon keeper Anthony Lopes made a string of good saves in a cagey contest played in front of 5,000 fans at Stade de France, who were allowed into the stadium in line with coronavirus safety regulations.

**Once upon a good time, East Bengal got it right****PULKESH MUKHOPADHYAY****SHORT POINT**

**H**aving completed a century of existence, well might East Bengal gloat over a choc-a-block trophy cabinet but they know most of the stash dates from, well, long ago. Any appraisal of the present will accord to them the honour only of being famous for being famous, hardly an enviable state of being for a football club still with a lot of fans.

The failure so far to win the I-League will take some coming to terms with and the Indian Super League's persistent spurning of them - they played the history card, the ISL wanted cash, a lot of it - is another big blow. If the frequency of East Bengal's collective lamentations conse-

quent upon missing the ISL yet another year is any indicator, they could also be in the throes of an existential crisis, given that they await the false dawn for the dubious holy grail. For all the talk about new investors and sponsors, the Covid-19 reality inside their Maidan pavilion is no escapist film with a lot of fun and frolic. But they would have done some things right in the good old days when rivals dreaded running into them anywhere in the country. Should they look the record book up, they could also happen upon what would be beyond them - and all the rest - today.

The vital resource they

can't take for granted any more is a core of local talent marked by class and distinction. There, of course, were those seasoned campaigners - Mohammad Habib, Mohammad Akbar, Shyam Thapa (1970-1, 1975), C Prasad (1972), among others - around but East Bengal didn't mind losing them when they chose to move away as they were seldom short of replacements they could count on. Both Habib and Akbar switched over to Mohammad Sporting Club in 1975, but that didn't stop East Bengal from completing the local double. But players of the calibre of Sudhir Karmakar, Asoke Banerjee, Shyamal Ghosh,

Prabin Majumdar, Gautam Sarkar, Samarendra Choudhury, Subhas Bhownik and Surajit Sengupta are just not available today. It's nobody's case that the 1970s superstars made the world's jaws hit the floor but, equally truly, they had what it took to dominate Indian football for quite a while, which they did.

In terms of talent discovery, Bengal football is moribund nowadays as the old competitive structure across the districts and sub-divisions have long been left dismantled. Everything calls for money, which is scarce.

Tournaments have gone kaput, so those commonplace morning or afternoon tune-ups are redundant in the hicktown. A lot of coaches, dabbling in stuff they don't know a thing about, run com-

mercially organised so-called academies whose USP is their ability to wangle berths in Kolkata teams for their well-heeled trainees. It's a fact that there are clubs in Kolkata that rely entirely on these wonky and ultimately futile schemes for seasons to be got through economically.

East Bengal, among others, were among those with the wherewithal to spot, groom and showcase the real talent Bengal could still have. That would indeed have been the harder path but the softer option - buying instead of building the team - has shepherded them where they happen to be now. If they don't like it there, they don't seem keen on moving on either. Stagnation results, but that's just one facet of a comprehensive eclipse.

**Hamilton takes pole for home British GP in record time****AGENCIES  
SILVERSTONE (ENGLAND), 1 AUGUST**

Six times Formula One world champion Lewis Hamilton shattered the Silverstone track record with a blistering lap to put dominant Mercedes on pole position for his home British Grand Prix on Saturday.

The 35-year-old, who will be chasing a record seventh win at Silverstone on Sunday, was joined on the front row by Finnish team mate Valtteri Bottas with Red Bull's Max Verstappen qualifying third. The pole was the 91st of Hamilton's career and seventh at Silverstone and he made sure of it with a lap of one minute 24.303 seconds after Bottas had led the opening two ses-

sions on a gusty afternoon. Hamilton had spun at Luffield at the start of the second phase of qualifying, without damaging his car but bringing out red flags due to the amount of gravel scattered across the track.

Bottas, five points adrift of his team mate in the championship after three races, could only manage a best effort of 1:24.616. Verstappen was more than a second off Hamilton's pace as the best of the rest, with Ferrari's Charles Leclerc joining him on the second row while his four-times champion team mate Sebastian Vettel qualified 10th. The Dutch driver's Albon failed to make the top 10, continuing a run of poor Saturday form by qualifying 12th.