



CHAMPION DEPARTS



NEW ZEALAND POLLS
DELAYED AFTER
VIRUS OUTBREAK

P6

P9



US HOUSE BACK IN
SESSION TO VOTE
ON POSTAL BILL

P10



WANTAWAY MESSI
BEING WOODED BY
MAJOR CLUBS

P12

WEATHER

Generally cloudy sky. Moderate rain/thundershowers. Heavy rain at isolated places towards afternoon/evening. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 34 and 29 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: 023.2 MM

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 100% Min: 61%

TEMPERATURE

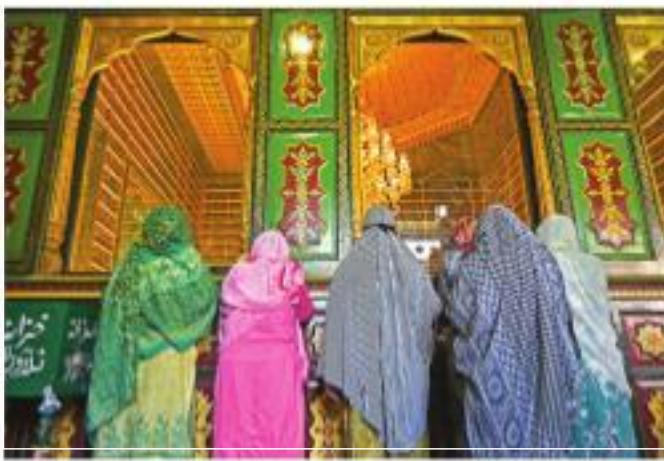
Max: 36.5°C (+3) Min: 26.8°C (0)

SUN RISES

05:53 hrs SUN SETS 18:57 hrs

MOON RISES 05:48 hrs MOON SETS 18:43 hrs

THUMBNAILS



Devotees pray inside the Sheikh Abdul Qadir Geelani shrine in Srinagar on Monday as religious places were reopened in Kashmir nearly five months after the onset of pandemic. AFP

Rakesh Asthana appointed BSF DC: Gujarat cadre IPS Officer Rakesh Asthana has been appointed as the chief of the Border Security Force (BSF) and V S K Kaumudi will be Special Secretary (Internal Security) in the Home Ministry, according to a Personnel Ministry order issued on Monday. Asthana, a 1984 batch IPS officer is at present working as the DG of Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) in the Capital. He has been appointed the DG of BSF from the date of joining up to 31 July, 2021.

High-value transactions not required in ITR: Taxpayers will not be required to mention their high-value transactions in their income tax returns, officials said. "There is no such proposal to modify income tax return forms," an official said, on the reports of the proposed expansion of reportable financial transactions to include hotel payments over Rs 20,000, life insurance premium payment over Rs 50,000 and health insurance premium payment over Rs 20,000, payment of school/college fees over Rs 1 lakh a year.

Top lawyers castigate SC contempt verdict against Bhushan

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 17 AUGUST

A slew of leading lawyers of the country has issued a statement castigating the Supreme Court's 14 August judgment holding noted activist-lawyer Prashant Bhushan guilty of contempt for his two tweets in the matter.

A Bench headed by Justice Arun Mishra would hear on 20 August the arguments on quantum of sentence to be awarded to Bhushan in the matter.

In their joint statement, the lawyers noted with "dismay" the judgment of the Supreme Court in the Bhushan contempt case.

An independent judiciary consisting of independent judges and lawyers, is the basis of the rule of law in a Constitu-

tionary democracy. Mutual respect and the absence of coercion, are the hallmarks of a harmonious relationship between the bar and bench. Any tilting of the balance, one way or the other, is deleterious both to the institution and the nation," the statement said.

The lawyers - including Navroz H Seervai, Darius J Khambata, Vrinda Grover, Dushyant Dave, Huzefa Ahmadi, Arvind Datar, Mihir Desai, Kamini Jaiswal, Shyam Divan, Lalit Bhasin, Sanjay R Hegde, and Menaka Guruswamy among others - pointed out that an independent judiciary does not mean that judges are immune from scrutiny and comment.

"It is the duty of lawyers to freely bring any shortcomings to the notice of bar, bench and the public at large. While some of us may have divergent views on the advisability and content of Mr. Prashant Bhushan's two tweets, we are unanimously of the view that no contempt of court was intended or committed..." they stated.

"While Mr. Prashant Bhushan as a lawyer of good standing of the Supreme Court, may not be an ordinary man, his tweets do not say anything out of the ordinary, other than what is routinely expressed about the court's working in recent years by many on public forum and on social media. Even some retired judges of the Supreme Court have expressed somewhat similar views," their statement pointed out.

Referring to the apex court's verdict, they said: "This judgment does not restore the authority of the court in the eyes of the public. Rather, it will discourage lawyers from being outspoken... A bar silenced under the threat of contempt, will undermine the independence and ultimately the strength of the court. A silenced bar, can-

not lead to a strong court."

They also expressed severe disappointment about "the Supreme Court's utter disregard of the presence of the Learned Attorney General, a highly respected lawyer of great eminence, and its refusal to seek his valuable opinion in the matter, which is mandated even as per contempt law".

The lawyers demanded that "the judgment must not be given effect to, until a larger bench, sitting in open court after the pandemic has the opportunity to review the standards of criminal contempt".

"We do believe that the Supreme Court will hear the Voice of the People expressed all around in last 72 hours on the subject and take corrective steps to prevent miscarriage of Justice," their statement added.

"The content, which even includes my photograph is evidently threatening to my life and body and I fear for my safety as well as that of my family members. The content also maligns my reputation based on a news article and I am subjected to name-calling, cyberbullying and eve-teasing online," mentioned Das in the complaint.

As per the reports, Cyber cell unit is looking into the complaint by Das. However, an FIR is yet to be filed and matter is under inquiry.

Das also alleged that she was intentionally vilified by the accused due to their "political affiliations" and are now engaging in online and offline abuse, subjecting her to "criminal intimidation and making sexual-coloured remarks".

All these started after an article published in *The Wall Street Journal* that claimed Das was opposed to applying Facebook's hate speech rules to four individuals and groups with links to BJP citing business imperatives.

Das was opposed to applying Facebook's hate speech rules to four individuals and groups with links to BJP citing business imperatives

Street Journal that claimed Das was opposed to applying Facebook's hate speech rules to four individuals and groups with links to the Bharatiya Janata Party.

The article also mentioned that issue, promoting violence, was internally flagged but she was against applying the rules citing business imperatives.

It claims that Das had told staff members that punishing BJP politicians for these violations would be detrimental to the "company's business prospects in India, Facebook's biggest global market by number of users."

Therefore, in her complaint, Das mentioned Facebook and Twitter accounts where she has been getting multiple threats and some are even using her photos.

The article that was published on 14 August created furore as the ruling BJP and the Opposition Congress traded barbs over Facebook's alleged bias towards the ruling dispensation.

Indian classical vocalist Pandit Jasraj died on Monday following a cardiac arrest at his home in New Jersey, his daughter Durga Jasraj said. He was 90.

One of India's greatest music legends, Pandit Jasraj leaves behind a storied legacy spanning almost eight decades. Bapuji is no more, his daughter Durga, also a musician, said over phone from Mumbai.

Jasraj, who belonged to the Mehta Gharana, was in the US when the coronavirus-led lockdown happened and decided to stay back in that country.

With profound grief we inform that Sangeet Martand Pandit Jasraj ji breathed his last this morning at 5.15 EST due to a cardiac arrest at his home in New Jersey, USA, a statement issued by his family.

May Lord Krishna welcome him to heaven, where Pandit ji will now sing *Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudeva* exclusively just for his beloved Lord. We pray that his soul rests in eternal musical peace," it said. PTI

Naidu alleges phone-tapping; urges PM Modi to order inquiry

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD, 17 AUGUST

Former Andhra Pradesh chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking an inquiry against the YSRCP-led state government over his allegations that it was illegally tapping the phones of opposition leaders, social activists, advocates and even judges, posing a threat to national security.

In his letter, Naidu alleged: "It appears that the YSRCP-led government has not followed any due procedure of law in tapping the phones of people from various walks of life."

Thus, it directly stands against Article 19 and 21 fundamental rights guaranteed in the Constitution where the

right to privacy is violated."

He further accused the state government of using illegal software and cutting edge technology and tools in tapping of phones which is being done by roping in private individuals for YSRCP's own political gains.

"With such sophisticated technology in the hands of miscreants will not only violate the right to privacy of individuals but would also lead to compromise of people in high places by bringing them under blackmail threat (sic)," wrote Naidu.

He went on to add that the ruling YSRCP has now targeted the judiciary as "it was facing hurdles" in the High Court.

It may be pointed out that the YS Jagan Mohan Reddy-led government had been

pulled up by the High Court in several cases including the arbitrary removal of the State Election Commissioner and painting of Panchayat offices in party houses.

The High Court has initiated contempt of court proceedings against 44 people including YSRCP MP and party supporters for berating the judges as "Mr. Naidu's men" on social media after unfavourable rulings.

Naidu signed off with an appeal to the Prime Minister seeking an inquiry by the Government of India to prevent such unlawful activities in the state. YSRCP leader Ambati Rambabu however, dismissed the allegations saying that there was no reason for the state government to resort to phone tapping.

No shelving JEE, NEET exams, says Supreme Court

SNS/PTI
NEW DELHI, 17 AUGUST

The Supreme Court on Monday declined to entertain a plea seeking the postponement of the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) and Joint Entrance Examination (JEE), slated in September.

The apex court refused to entertain the plea saying life should move on even in Covid-19 times.

A bench headed by Justice Arun Mishra noted that the postponement of the exams will put the career of the students in peril. Justice Mishra said if the exams are not held, then would it not be a loss for the country? Students will lose the academic year.

Declining to entertain the plea, Justice Mishra told the petitioners' counsel, "Are you not demanding that the court should be opened up amid Covid-19?"

QUESTION MARK ON EXAMS

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should be opened up amid Covid-19? Do you see this glass partition here. When we are getting ready to open up, you say exams should not be held?" Justice Mishra added that education should be opened up, as Covid-19 may continue for a year more.

"Are you going to wait another year?" Justice Mishra posed this question to the petitioners' counsel.

Solicitor General Tushar

authorities are not aware of this situation?"

The bench said it will not interfere with the policy decision taken by the authorities concerned and took on record Mehta's submission that exams will be held with adequate precautions.

Lakhs of young students are likely to appear in the aforementioned JEE (Main) April-2020 and NEET UG-2020 Exams in the months of September 2020.

Meanwhile, Covid-19 cases are increasing in India at an alarming rate. The deadly pandemic Covid-19 has already affected about 20 lakh people in India and the situation is worsening by every passing day.

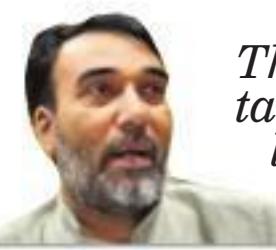
"Conducting the aforesaid examination across India at such a perilous time, is nothing else but putting the lives

of lakhs of young students (including petitioners here) at utmost risk and danger of disease and death", the petition stated.

The plea had also alleged that authorities concerned have ignored the plight of lakhs of students from Bihar, Assam and north eastern states, which are presently reeling under flood, and conducting either online or offline exams in such places may not be possible.

It had alleged that NTA has indefinitely postponed the National Council of Hotel Management Joint Entrance Examination-2020, which was scheduled to be conducted on 22 June, in wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The plea had also sought direction to the authorities to increase the number of examination centres.



The Centre has set a target of planting 15 lakh saplings in Delhi. Our target is 31 lakh. We launched a pakhwara recently and planted 10 lakh saplings.

GOPAL RAI

DELHI ENVIRONMENT MINISTER

Hate content: Delhi Assembly panel to summon FB officials

Delhi Assembly Committee receives complaints against Facebook over its 'deliberate and intentional inaction to contain hateful content'; the panel'd examine any complicity of FB officials in Delhi riots

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, 17 AUGUST

The Delhi Assembly's Committee on Peace and Harmony has received multiple complaints, addressed to its Chairman Raghav Chadha, underscoring alleged instances of "intentional and deliberate inaction" on the part of social media platform Facebook to enforce its policies against inflammatory and hateful content.

There is also mention in these complaints of an alleged larger "conspiracy" involving the social media giant with respect to the scathing revelations made by a news report published in The Wall Street Journal (WSJ) on 14 August.

The Delhi Assembly panel said that it will summon Facebook officials over these complaints about the social media platform's alleged "deliberate and intentional inaction to contain hateful content" in India.

A statement issued by the Committee said a BJP leader has been mentioned in the WSJ report as an alleged hate-monger spared by Facebook. "Interestingly, a video featuring Mark Zuckerberg" quotes the con-



tents of that BJP leader's posts as "categorically offensive and hateful".

Despite this, officials of Facebook are alleged to have turned a blind eye to the hate-speech and spreading of communal hatred, the statement said.

The statement also said that in view of this the Committee felt compelled to take immediate notice of the development and to get to the root of this issue with a view to finding out if there is any role or complicity of Facebook officials in Delhi riots.

It has been alleged in the complaints that the Facebook "despite its comprehensive

sent for appearance of the officials concerned of Facebook and more importantly, Ankhi Das, in due course to ensure their presence before the committee for participating in the relevant proceedings and the committee shall convene its meeting this week to initiate the proceedings forthwith," the statement reportedly said.

Das is said to be Facebook's Director, Public Policy, India, South and Central Asia.

It has been alleged in the complaints that the Facebook "despite its comprehensive



Raghav Chadha

policies and regulations on curbing unabated dissemination of hateful and offensive content, has been turning a blind eye to mass manufacturing and propagation of vile, hateful communal content which are not only bad in taste but have potential to erupt violence and riot-like situation."

The statement said the complaints refer to the WSJ article, 'Facebook's Hate-

Speech Rules Collide With Indian Politics', where a specific mention has been made describing an explicit resistance posed by one Ms.

Ankhi Das, Facebook's top Public Policy Director, for applying the hate speech rules to at least one Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) politician and other Hindu nationalist individuals and groups', despite the fact that the content posted by these

individuals or groups had been 'flagged internally for promoting violence'.

The Committee has decided to delve into the issue and to see if there is "any conspiracy and unholy nexus of rabble-rousers to wreak havoc in the country, particularly in Delhi, by disturbing peace and tranquility as well as instigating intense communal disharmony," the statement added.

said in a statement.

"Prohibition of taking passengers from metro stations has also been imposed on these e rickshaw drivers and a private company called 'Smart E' has been authorized to take passengers from the metro stations," Bidhuri alleged.

Kejriwal has "jeopardised" the employment of two-and-a-half lakhs e-rickshaw drivers by allegedly allowing the private company to take passengers from metro stations, Bidhuri claimed.

These drivers should be allowed outside all the metro stations, otherwise they would face employment crisis, he said.

The Delhi CM should fulfill his poll promises made to the drivers of these e-rickshaws without any delay, Bidhuri said, adding he has also written a letter to the CM in this regard.



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, 17 AUGUST

Leader of the Opposition (LOP) in the Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri on Monday criticised Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal for his alleged failure to resolve the parking problems of two-and-a-half lakh e-rickshaw drivers in the national capital.

The

BJP

leader

claimed

that the representatives of e-rickshaw drivers had met him and requested him to take steps to address their problems. The representatives told Bidhuri that it was Kejriwal's poll promises that he would resolve parking problems for them, the LOP said.

Setting up charging stations and allocating designated parking spaces for these e-rickshaw drivers were the poll promises made by Kejriwal before the Assembly polls, Bidhuri

said.

Classified

TENDER NOTICE



publication of this notice after that no claim or demand will be entertained.

Pradip Kumar Bandyopadhyay Advocate

File No. WB/2651/1998

100, South Sinterland

Kol-30

Mobile No.: 983015835

WE REQUIRE a Graduate having 3 yrs. experience in Khadi Cluster Development Work for Chitrashali, Nadia, W.B. Interested candidates send their resume at chitrashalikhadicluster@gmail.com IA: Shuddha Khadi Bhandar.



THAT my client, Manika Dutta, Tushar Kanti Ghosh and Bharati Sarkar are the joint owners of one Flat being Flao. No. 9 on the Second Floor (South-East side) of a Building of 1000 sq. ft. or less at Holding No. 77, Subhas Nagar Road, Dilip Kumar Ghosh and his wife were the owners of the said flat, died intestate without any issue. Manika Dutta, Tushar Kanti Dutta and Bharati Sarkar as brother and sisters inherit the said Flat.

That anyone claim or demand on the said property please contact in the belowmentioned address within 15 days from the

date of this notice.

Bikram Kumar Advocate

23/15, Naktala Road

Kolkata-700027

Mb.: 9830404595

9330734700

E-mail:

advbikram1981@gmail.com

Whole Shaheen Bagh protest scripted by BJP, alleges AAP

PTI
NEW DELHI, 17 AUGUST

IT IS noted that M/s. Akshara Villa Private Limited Owner / Occupier of All That piece and parcel of land measuring an area 2395 sq.ft. approximately together with Bungalow / Villa No. 6, Block D (North facing), situated at Premises No. 14A, Rowland Road, Ward No. 69, P.S. Ballygunge, Kolkata-700020, has agreed to sell, transfer the said property in favour of my client.

Any person having any right, title, interest, claim or demand of any nature whatsoever in respect of the aforesaid property should lodge a claim with us within 15 days from this date failing which no such claim shall be entertained.

Bikram Kumar Advocate

23/15, Naktala Road

Kolkata-700027

Mb.: 9830404595

9330734700

E-mail:

advbikram1981@gmail.com

scripted by the BJP. The topmost leadership of the BJP scripted each and every step of these protests," he alleged. They decided who will speak what, who will attack whom and then who will be doing the counterattack. All these things were preplanned and well-scripted, Bharadwaj claimed.

He said the key people behind the Shaheen Bagh protest joined the BJP on Sunday in the presence of the senior leadership of the party.

Today the question is: does the BJP want to give a message that the people who used to raise anti-national slogans will now be part of the BJP?" he asked. Bharadwaj claimed that in Delhi, the BJP's vote percentage rose from 18 to 38 due to the Shaheen Bagh protests and it was the only party that benefited from the controversy surrounding the agitation.

"Due to this protest, BJP polarised north-east Delhi, won some seats and then engineered a riot," Bharadwaj charged.

His allegations drew a rebuttal from Manoj Tiwari, the chief of Delhi BJP when these protests happened, who said his party does not discriminate on the basis of religion, caste, creed or lin-

eage. "Now the confusion is getting cleared and Muslim brothers and sisters want to walk with the BJP. Stop dividing Arvind Kejriwal ji. The world's largest party BJP represents all religions and does not discriminate on the basis of religion, caste, creed or lineage," Tiwari said in a tweet in Hindi.

Shaheen Bagh became the epicentre of the protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) protests here, joined the BJP. Bharadwaj alleged the BJP's campaign for the Delhi election centred around the Shaheen Bagh protests and it was the only party that benefited from the controversy surrounding the agitation.

"Delhi assembly election could have been fought on the issue of education, health, environment or other developmental narratives. But the Delhi BJP chose to fight the election on the issue of Shaheen Bagh, he told a press conference.

The whole Shaheen Bagh protest was

scripted by the BJP. The topmost leadership of the BJP scripted each and every step of these protests," he alleged. They decided who will speak what, who will attack whom and then who will be doing the counterattack. All these things were preplanned and well-scripted, Bharadwaj claimed.

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Covid: 787 new cases in Delhi, 18 fresh deaths

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 17 AUGUST

Delhi today recorded 787 new novel coronavirus (Covid-19) cases, which pushed its Covid tally to over 1.53 lakh, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

The city's Covid death toll rose to 4,214 with 18 fatalities recorded today, the health bulletin said.

The active cases of the coronavirus disease rose to 10,852 from 10,823 the previous day in the national capital. The total number of Covid cases climbed to 1,53,367 in Delhi, the bulletin stated.

The city had reported 652 new coronavirus cases and eight fresh Covid deaths yesterday.

The cumulative total of recovered Covid patients in Delhi rose to 1,38,301 with 740 patients getting recovered from the infectious disease over the last 24 hours, according to the bulletin. The city's Covid recovery rate climbed to 90.17 per cent.

The number of Covid tests conducted in Delhi today was 14,988, the bulletin stated.

The number of coronavirus tests in Delhi has gone down in August as compared to July, with the government attributing it to the decrease in Covid infections in the national capital.

The authorities conducted over 2.58 lakh Covid tests in Delhi between August 1 and 15,



whereas the figure stood at over 3.13 lakh in the same period in July. Between July 16 and 31, over 2.96 lakh tests were conducted in Delhi.

"It is wrong to say that the number of tests in Delhi has dipped in the last few days. We are doing sufficient number of tests in Delhi. There can be fluctuations over short time periods, but overall we have been consistently doing 19,000-20,000 tests daily for months now," an official said.

The official said the number of tests was low on some days in August as compared to July, with the government attributing it to the decrease in Covid infections in the national capital.

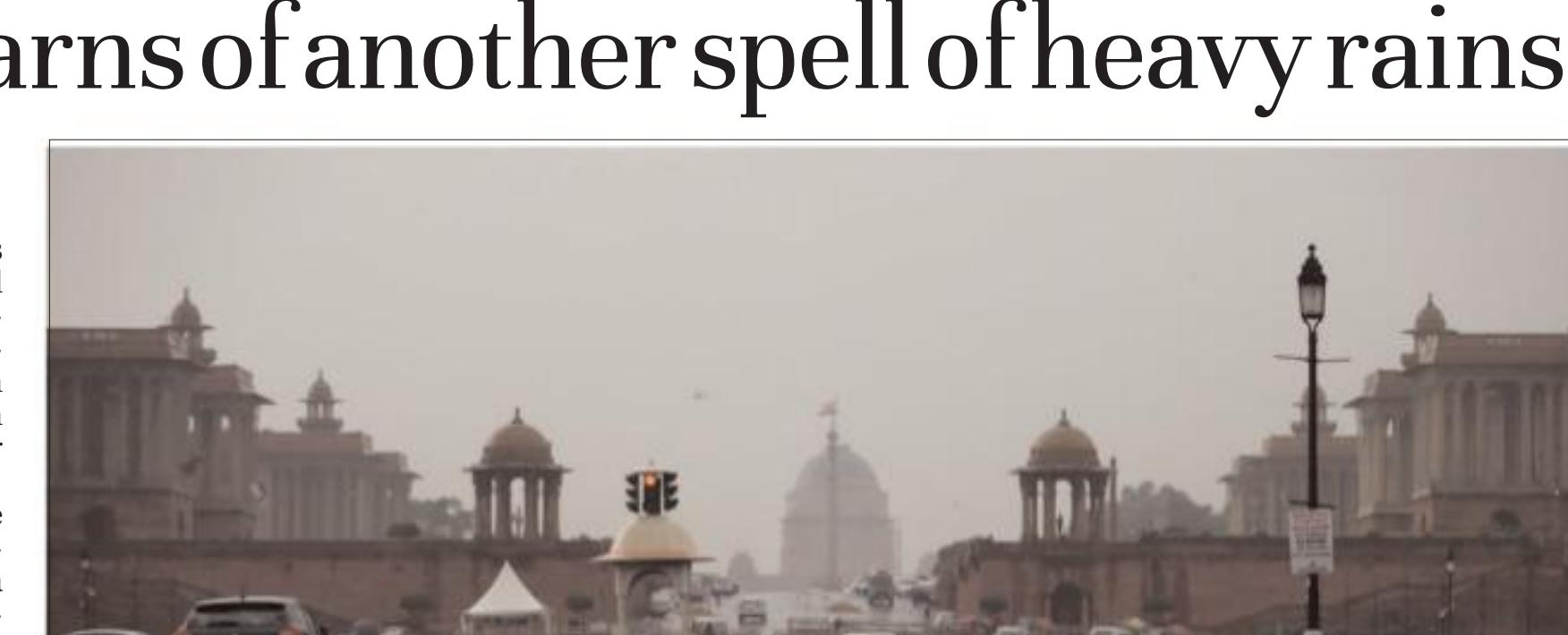
According to the official, people do not go out for Covid test during festivals unless and until it is absolutely necessary.

Rainfall recorded over 15 mm is considered light, between 15 and 64.5 mm is moderate and above 64.5 mm is heavy.

The Safdarjung Observatory has recorded 115.6 mm rainfall against the normal of 149.2 mm in August so far, a deficiency of 23.2 per cent.

Overall, it has recorded 434.2 mm rainfall, 2 per cent more than the normal of 425.3 mm since June 1 when the monsoon season starts.

IMD warns of another spell of heavy rains in Delhi

PTI
NEW DELHI, 17 AUGUST

During the rain in the Capital on Monday.

A fresh spell of rains drenched the national capital on Monday, bringing relief from sultry weather, with the weatherman predicting increase in intensity of showers over the next two days.

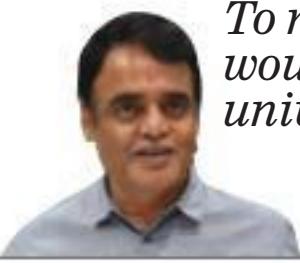
Kuldeep Srivastava, the head of the regional forecasting center of the India Meteorological Department, said the monsoon trough has once again shifted towards north and will remain close to the national capital over the next three days.

"Moderate rains are expected till Thursday. Also, there are chances of one or two spells of heavy rains," he said.

The IMD said a low

pressure area has also developed over northeast Madhya Pradesh and which will further intensify the convergence of moisture-laden south-westerly winds from the Arabian Sea and south-easterly winds from the Bay of Bengal.

On Monday, the Saf-



To reach all the goals set by the NEP by 2030, the Karnataka government would establish six research-centred universities, 10 teaching-centred universities and 34 autonomous educational institutions in three years.

C.N. ASHWATH NARAYAN
KARNATAKA DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER

NEW DELHI, TUESDAY 18 AUGUST 2020

03

Capt mulls harsher measures in areas reporting Covid spike

Punjab CM doesn't rule out lockdown, but makes it clear that economic activity won't be allowed to suffer

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 17 AUGUST

Expressing serious concern over the surge in Covid-19 cases and increasing number of deaths per million in the state, Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Monday said he was not averse to imposing harsher measures to check further spread of the pandemic.

At a video conference (VC) meeting of his Cabinet, which reviewed the Covid situation, the CM, in response to a suggestion from the expert health advisory committee chairman Dr KK Talwar, said if needed, the state government would consider going in for strong measures to combat the coronavirus.

Though he did not rule out



lockdown, especially in areas with high spike in cases, Amarinder made it clear that economic activity will not be allowed to suffer.

In his presentation on the Covid crisis, Dr Talwar said four districts—Ludhiana, Mohali,

than 800 fatalities. Deaths per million had also gone up to 27.2, and as many as 265 patients were on oxygen and 20 on ventilators at present, he said, underlining the need for early testing and treatment for saving lives. The state had reached 20000 tests per day, including rapid antigen testing, he said.

Dr Talwar cited researchers to point out that strict adherence to wearing masks for the next four weeks could help control the pandemic. Amarinder said the district and police officials had been given strict directives to enforce masks and other Covid safety protocols. Earlier, Montek Singh Ahluwalia, who is heading the Expert Group for revival of the state's economy, also said any measures to check the Covid spread should

not impact economic activity. Montek also reiterated, while briefing the cabinet on the Group's initial recommendations, that there was no suggestion made on withdrawal of free power to farmers, as was being projected by a section of the media.

Montek said the Group was in favour of diversification to reduce dependence on paddy, and wanted Punjab to spend 20 per cent more per year, for the next five years, on development of the public health infrastructure. Warning that the state must also be ready for a second spike, the economist said if lockdowns had to be introduced in certain areas then strict protocols should be put in place to ensure that there is no impact on the industrial and income generating avenues.

Court acquits man accused of child labour

PTI
NEW DELHI, 17 AUGUST

A Delhi court has acquitted a man accused of employing a child in his tea shop by giving him benefit of doubt that the alleged victim could have been above 14.

Additional Sessions Judge Parveen Singh noted that as per a medical board set up in the matter, the age of the child was more than 13 years and less than 15 years.

As per Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act, complete prohibition has been imposed on employment of child labour (i.e. a person below the age of 14 years) in any establishment whether hazardous or not.

The maximum punishment under the Act is two-year jail term.

In the order passed on

August 11, the judge said I find that as the prosecution has failed to prove that at the time of his rescue, the victim was aged less than 14 years, the benefit has to go to the accused and the appellant cannot be convicted for failing foul of the provisions of sections of Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act and thus, he could not have been convicted under the Act.

Rejecting prosecution's other accusation, the court said that merely because a gas stove was being used, it could not be said that the accused had exposed the victim to a situation which was likely to cause physical suffering to him.

On the aspect of exploitation, the court noted that the victim had himself deplored that the accused used to pay him Rs 140 per month and he had fixed a reasonable working hours.

The accused is acquitted of all the charges framed against him, the judge said.

The accused was tried and a magisterial court awarded him simple imprisonment for three months in August 2018.

Thereafter, the accused challenged the verdict before a sessions court.

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for the violation under section 188 of the IPC.

The charges made Harish Rawat to launch a counter attack on BJP. Defending Congress leaders, who participated in the rally, Harish Rawat said, 'On my appeal, all wore masks. None of the BJP leaders have been booked for gathering in a political rally and violating norms in Uttarakhand. The ruling government should fix up a number-50, 60, 100 persons and strictly implement the rule for every political, religious and social function. We will follow it.'

The bullock cart rally has hurt Harish Rawat in some way as he has developed a slip disc type problem and has announced not meeting the public for a few days. Harish Rawat and other Congress leaders were booked

Himachal gears up to implement National Education Policy

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 17 AUGUST

Himachal Pradesh Education Minister Govind Singh Thakur emphasized on implementing National Education Policy-2020 during the review meeting of Higher Education Department here on Monday.

Thakur said that Himachal Pradesh has always done an excellent work in the field of education and will do its best in the country in implementing the National Education Policy-2020.

There is continuous progress in the state in the field of higher education.

There are 182 Government Senior Secondary Schools, 929 Government Higher Secondary Schools, 1511 Private Senior Secondary and Higher Schools, 129 Govt

ernment Degree Colleges, four Government B.Ed. College, 71 Private B.Ed. college, 54 private colleges and 17 private universities in Himachal Pradesh.

The state has also been given the award for Best Performing in Education-2019 and National Skoch Award of Merit for Quality Education in 2019.

The Education Minister said that during the tenure of the present government, a total of 348597 students have enrolled in colleges of the state.

In the year 2018-19, the gross enrolment ratio at the secondary level (10th) in the state was 107.74 percent while at the higher secondary level (12th) the ratio was 85 percent.

The student-teacher ratio at the secondary level in the year 2018-19 in the state was

13.9 percent while at the senior secondary level this ratio was 10.49 percent.

The department has spent Rs. 2962.60 crore in the year 2019-20 and a budget provision of Rs. 3671.95 crore has been made for the year 2020-21.

As many as 1171 construction works allotted by the department in the state have been completed while 314 works are under progress.

Thakur said that Rs 92 crore has been sanctioned by the Central Government under the National Higher Education Campaign-2 (RUSA) in the state. He said that Rs 55 crore have been sanctioned for Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Cluster University Mandi in the state.

Facilities like gym, amphitheatre, solar power plant, instruments, science,

language, IT laboratories, libraries etc. are being provided in various colleges under RUSA.

Under the Global Investors Meet-2019, the Education Department has signed 45 MoUs for investment of Rs. 1468 crore in the state, out of which work on nine projects with investment of Rs 344.50 crore has been started.

Secretary Education Rajiv Sharma informed that in the year 2018-19, Rs 8.80 crore was spent on 25249 students under various centrally sponsored scholarship schemes, while Rs. 12.21 crore was spent on 38312 students under various state sponsored scholarship schemes.

In the year 2019-20, free course books were distributed to 1,03,134 students, on which Rs. 11.89 crore was spent.

Free uniform was distributed to 1,59,509 students in the year 2019-20 under the Atal School Uniform Scheme by spending Rs. 13.05 crore. In the year 2019-20, Rs 2.33 crore were released for the activities of the National Service Scheme (NSS).

Director Higher Education Dr Amarjeet Sharma said that B. Vocational degree courses were being conducted in 12 colleges of the state, with the objective to provide employment oriented education to the students.

Besides this, students are also being made aware of important issues such as drug prevention, road safety, disaster management etc.

Special Secretary Education Rakhi Kahlon and other senior officers of the department were also present on the occasion.

Harish Rawat takes a bullock cart ride to hold protest

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
DEHRADUN, 17 AUGUST

The Uttarakhand BJP has attacked former Uttarakhand Chief Minister & current AICC general secretary Harish Rawat for taking out a bullock cart in Roorkee on the Independence Day by allegedly violating the Covid-19 norms.

Rawat took out the rally from Dhanda to Landaura in protest against poor road conditions in the area. To highlight the issue, Congress took out the protest march.

Accusing Harish Rawat of not

maintaining social distancing, Uttarakhand BJP president Bansidhar Bhagat said, "Harish Rawat is making desperate efforts to revive his politics. In the rally Congressmen violated social distancing norms and a large number of Congress members rode on the cart, which was cruelly against animals."

The bullock cart rally has hurt Harish Rawat in some way as he has developed a slip disc type problem and has announced not meeting the public for a few days. Harish Rawat and other Congress leaders were booked



SJVN bags 100 MW solar power project in Gujarat

SHIMLA, 17 AUGUST

Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam (SJVN) Ltd bagged 100 Mega Watt (MW) Solar Power Project in Dholera Solar Park through E-Reverse Auction @ INR 2.80/unit. Gujarat Urja Nigam Limited (GUVNL) has been developing the project through public-private partnership (PPP). GUVNL invited bids for 700 Mega Watt capacity for which bids totaling to 1300 MW were received. Shimla based SJVN submitted a bid for 100 MW capacity. During the E-reverse auction (ERA) bagged the quoted capacity of 100 MW @ INR 2.80 /Unit on Build Own and Operate (BOO) basis. Chairman & Managing Director, Nand Lal Sharma told that the tentative cost of Development of this project is INR 450 crore. The project is expected to generate 244 MU (million units) in a year. The Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) shall be signed between GUVNL and SJVN for 25 years.

Sharma said that the Dholera solar park is in the Dholera Special Investment Region (DSIR), situated along the Gulf of Khambohat region, Gujarat. It is well-connected by road, rail, air and seaport and lies close

to the cities Ahmedabad, Bhavnagar and Vadodara.

He said at the current rates, solar power generation cost is at par with that of thermal power generation. Solar power tariff has been declining because of sharply declining prices of solar panels, better structuring of the project that reduces risk for project developers and availability of finances at competitive cost. He said that development of these parks will lead to realization of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of providing 175 GigaWatt (GW) of power through renewable sources by 2022.

1-day Punjab Assembly session on 28 August

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 17 AUGUST

The Punjab Assembly will convene on August 28 for a one-day session for the first time since the Covid pandemic broke out.

The go-ahead for the session came on Monday during a video conference (VC) meeting of the state Cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister Amarinder

The Cabinet noted the Constitutional requirement to hold a session within six months of the previous session and decided on a day-long session within two sittings on August 28, to be followed by a regular/longish session later, when the Covid situation improves.

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With the Cabinet decision, the Punjab Governor has been authorised to convene the 12th Session of 15th Punjab Assembly on September 4, 2020.

According to the Rules of Business of Punjab Government, 1992, the approval of Council of Ministers is necessary for summoning of the session of Punjab Assembly.

The session has been

KEEP YOUR CITY CLEAN & GREEN स्वच्छ सरक्षण 2021

DON'T DUMP IN PUBLIC PLACE

DUMP AT RIGHT PLACE

The dumping of Construction & Demolition Waste / Malba / Debris on public place is strictly prohibited in EDMC area and it is punishable offence as per MSW rule 2016. For unauthorized dumping of C&D Waste/Malba, a fine is applicable of Rs. 1000/- on the residents and Rs. 5000/- on non-residents. C&D waste generated by non bulk generator / private property owner shall be removed by EDMC and has to pay charges to EDMC as per terms and condition of the notification. C&D waste collection bin shall be provided by operator at construction/ reconstruction site on demand for accountability. 39 location/sites has been designated where Construction & Demolition Waste / Malba / Debris in small quantity only can be disposed by general public/residents.

Road No. 64, PWD road (IHBAS Hospital) at the corner of D-pocket Dilshad Garden

In front of I-Pocket, Dilshad Garden market adjacent to Red Cross Hospital

E-Block, Behind Gagan Cinema, Nand Nagari

Opp. Primary School, Near SI Office Sunder Nagri, Near N-Block, Pump House

Near Gurudwara DDA Land, New Seema Puri

Near Saboli Samshan Ghat DDA Park, Near CTC

Near Jail Road/ Petrol Pump Harsh Vihar, Wazirabad Road

Open space behind Chest Clinic M&CW Center, Karawala Nagar

Near dhala, X-Block, Bramhpuri

MTNL Ground, Yamuna Vihar

2nd Pusta in River side

Near Brij Puri Puliya on the bank of Drain no. 01

Loni Road near Golchakkari / Picnic Hut

Near Railway Fatak, under fly over MS Park (near Lal Bagh Jhuggi)

Opp. Muskan Restaurant behind Shahdara North Zonal office Shahdara

DDA Land near Petrol Pump, Opp. Usmanpur Police Station

Shastri Park DDA Land, Near D-Aqua Hotel

Near CRPF camp, Sonia Vihar

Bhim Gali No. 1, Kali Ghata Road, Open plot

Near Old Police Station, open side, Sri Ram Colony

Taj enclave road near dhala, Geeta Colony

Near Y-point, New Seelampur Metro line, G.T. Road

DDA road near Bhikam Singh colony

At Road No. 57 in between Jagatpuri Red Light and Karkari More Red Light

Open space near Dhalao D-Block Anand Vihar

Open DDA land in front of Fruits & vegetable Mkt Gazipur village

At Road No. 57 Near Mazar Opposite Hasanpur Bus Depot

At Road No. 57-A near NH-24 (from Max Hospital to NH-24)

Near Telco T-Point Road No. 57, Ghazipur

Adjoining Dhalao at Karkari More Red-light Drain No. 1

Between Mukesh Nagar drain & Railway line (near RUB Jhilmil)

Near Dhalao opp. Police Station Mayur Vihar Ph-1

DDA land opp. Chand Cinema

Canal Road opposite Dallpura

Near Dutt Bhawan Metro Station New Ashok Nagar

Canal Road opposite Rajbir Colony / Mullia Colony

DDA Land near block-19 Nehru Market Kalyan Puri

M.B. Road opposite Police Station Shakarpur

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Mukherjee continues to be critical: Hospital



NEW DELHI, 17 AUGUST

The condition of former President Pranab Mukherjee continues to be critical and he is on ventilator support, the Army's Research and Referral hospital said on Monday.

Doctors attending on him said his vital and clinical parameters are stable and he is being closely monitored.

Mukherjee was admitted to the hospital in Delhi Cantt on 10 August and was operated for removal of a clot in the brain. The 84-year-old has been in a coma and continues to remain critical since then. He has also tested positive for Covid-19.

According to Mukherjee's family, there has been a slight improvement in his health since he was operated upon. Mukherjee was the 13th President of India from 2012 to 2017.

Relapse of coronavirus in some Delhi hospitals

Doctors say patients with weak immunity are likely to get reinfected

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 17 AUGUST



Some hospitals in the national capital have said they are seeing recovered coronavirus patients returning to them with recurrence of the infection.

Earlier this month, the Delhi government-run Rajiv Gandhi Super Speciality Hospital saw two instances of patients with relapse of coronavirus, almost one-and-a-half months after they were cured of the infection. In both instances of relapse, the patients had moderate symptoms.

Aakash Health care in Dwarka had also reported a case where a cancer patient recovered from coronavirus and contracted the disease again after a couple of months. The second time proved fatal for the patient who succumbed to the virus.

Last month, the case of a

tum. We have the evidence that after ninth or tenth day the virus becomes non-infectious and the patients are not tested again," he said.

"However, the virus has been reported to be living in patients who have recovered around 39 to 40 days back," he added.

Dr Chandragouda Doda-

goudar, director of medical oncology at Akash Health-care in Dwarka, shared the case of a 65-year-old patient who had stage 2 lymphoma. The patient first visited the health facility in March and was advised chemotherapy but was very apprehensive due to the coronavirus disease.

"The patient delayed the treatment for two-and-a-half

months and took alternative medicines and when that medication did not work and she started having pain, she visited the hospital. She had contracted Covid-19 by then and the lymphoma had progressed from Stage 2 to Stage 4. We could not administer chemotherapy while she was undergoing Covid treatment," he said.

After the patient recovered from coronavirus, she was administered a slight dose of chemotherapy and became better and was discharged. But after a month, she had a relapse of Covid and ended up in a critical condition and succumbed last month.

The senior doctor said the patient did not have any other co-morbidities but called cancer a "co-morbidity".

Sherwal said patients with weak immunity are likely to get reinfection. "It can be there in cancer patients, HIV patients, etc," he said.

16 Haj Houses given for corona isolation facilities: Naqvi

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 17 AUGUST

Union minority affairs minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi on Monday said about 16 Haj Houses spread across the country have been given to state governments for providing quarantine and isolation facilities for corona virus-affected persons.

Naqvi's remarks came here at a function held to flag off mobile clinic, equipped with the latest health care facilities at the Holy Family Hospital.

The clinic has been given to the hospital by National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation under the Minority Affairs Ministry.

He said his department had also been engaged in training health workers under skill development initiative and supporting soldiers who suffered disabilities during wars with equipment.

Chinese spy case: Shanta Kumar seeks thorough probe

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 17 AUGUST

He advised Thakur to discuss the issue with senior officials at the Centre and take necessary steps to ensure safety and security of the Dalai Lama in Dharamshala.

Superintendent of Police, Kangra Vimukt Ranjan said the security agencies were already on alert to ensure safety and security of the Dalai Lama.

Meanwhile, China on Monday said it was ready to work with India to enhance political mutual trust, properly manage their differences and safeguard the long-term development of bilateral ties, adds PTI from Beijing.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said this at a regular briefing when a Western media journalist sought China's reaction to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remarks in his 74th Independence Day address that the Indian armed forces have given a befitting reply to those challenging the country's sovereignty.

UK launches 3 million pound innovation challenge fund in India

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 17 AUGUST

The UK government has launched a 3 million-pound Innovation Challenge Fund to support scientists in academia and industry to tackle the acute present day global challenges, like Covid-19 and the threat to environment.

The fund invites tech innovators with connections to the AI-Data cluster in Karnataka and the Future Mobility cluster in Maharashtra to submit research and development proposals for tackling Covid-19 or which promote a greener planet, a British High Commission release said today.

At least 12 grants up to 250,000 pounds are expected to be awarded. Applicants are required to submit bids as an academia-industry consortium, ideally with an international member. The deadline for submitting two-page concept notes is 31 August.

The initiative builds on the Indian and British Prime Ministers' commitment to bring together the best minds from both countries under the UK-India Tech Partnership, to deliver high-skilled jobs and economic growth as well as to collaborate on some of the

Railways to commercially develop Howrah Salt Golah land

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 17 AUGUST

According to a statement issued by RLDA, the site is suitable for development of riverfront luxury tourism and water sports hub. It is located on a 20-metre-wide road along the riverbank and is 1.5 km away from Howrah Station

world's biggest challenges. High Commissioner to India, Sir Philip Barton, said: "The UK and India have a strong history of research and innovation. Both Covid-19 and climate change demonstrate that the most urgent challenges are global. Never has there been a greater need for academia, business and government to accelerate innovation, and for nations to collaborate to save lives and build a better future."

Karen McLuskie, Head of the UK-India Tech Partnership at the British High Commission, said: "This fund aims to get behind the innovation heroes, whether they are working to battle the virus or the even greater looming global threat: climate change. We are proud to work with India, as twin world leaders in the development and adoption of emerging tech for the benefit of all."

In April 2018, the Indian and British PMs announced the formal creation of the UK-India Tech Partnership. The programme aims to bring together the best minds working in tech to unlock its future potential and deliver high-skilled jobs and economic growth in both countries.

In a novel move, a private bus operators' association in West Bengal has decided to reserve two seats for transgender commuters in buses affiliated to it, an official said. Joint Council of Bus Syndicates general secretary Tapan Banerjee said two seats in every bus associated with the organisation will be marked as "Tridhara". He claimed that around 35,000-40,000 buses in the state are affiliated with the association.

"It is not just about earmarking two seats but to recognise transgender people and create awareness among commuters to treat them as equals," Banerjee said. He said the process of marking the seats has already begun in a couple of routes in the city and will be done in all buses associated with the council.

Miss Banerjee said that it is unjustified on the part of those people who criticise and malign police for failing to handle the law and order situation.

"We hit out at the police on small issues and complain that police are unable to handle the law and order situation.

"In West Bengal 13 out of 23 districts have international borders and many areas are congested so a few stray incidents may occur through these are unwanted.

Those who criticise and

claim that around 35,000-40,000 buses in the state are affiliated with the association.

"What is happening in Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh?

"West Bengal Police is the best police and Kolkata Police, which was earlier compared to Scotland Yard, is working better. So we have to take care of their wellbeing," said Miss Banerjee.

On 1 September, work would be started for restructuring the police welfare board, which was initially set up in 2012.

Transgenders would get free ration till June 2021, she announced.

'Salt Golah' who had barred the Indians from collecting or selling salt under the Salt Act 1882. The 21-acre heritage property standing on the banks of River Hooghly was in ruins since decades.

Now, as the RLDA is considering plans of leasing out around 70 sites across the country, it has invited online bids for monetising the railway land at Salt Golah.

According to a statement issued by RLDA, the site is suitable for development of riverfront luxury tourism and water sports hub. It is located on a 20-metre-wide road along the riverbank and is 1.5 km away from Howrah Station.

GODDESS MASKED



Durga's idol seen wearing a silver mask during Khuti Puja celebrations amid Covid-19 pandemic, in Kolkata on Monday.

The minister, also an NCP leader, tested positive on Friday.

Meanwhile, the coronavirus cases doubled at a faster rate in Mumbai last week as compared to the previous week and the average growth rate of the viral infection also went up, according to the city civic body.

Till Sunday, Mumbai reported 1,28,726 Covid-19 cases and 7,133 deaths. The city's D-ward, which includes Peddar Road and Malabar Hill, had the fastest doubling rate of 50 days on Sunday, while M-East ward, that includes Chembur (East) area, had the slowest doubling rate of 119 days.

1 Sept to be observed as 'Police Day': Mamata

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 17 AUGUST

West Bengal Chief minister Mamata Banerjee today announced that 1 September would be observed as 'Police Day' as a mark of respect for their relentless service and directed restructuring the police welfare board to frame policies after considering their problems.

Both men and women police personnel would be included in a common gradation list to provide an equal scope of promotion.

Presently, there is no uniformity in promotion as men and women have separate

Covid battle," she said at a Press Conference in Nabanna. Hitting out at people for vandalism and political rallies, Miss Banerjee said Government of India has categorically put a restriction on political and religious gatherings.

"We hit out at the police on small issues and complain that police are unable to handle the law and order situation.

"In West Bengal 13 out of 23 districts have international borders and many areas are congested so a few stray incidents may occur through these are unwanted.

Those who criticise and

malign police and do politics on such issues should first take a stock of the situation in their own states.

"What is happening in

Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh?

"West Bengal Police is the

best police and Kolkata Police,

which was earlier compared to

Scotland Yard, is working

better. So we have to take care

of their wellbeing," said Miss

Banerjee. On 1 September,

work would be started for

restructuring the police wel-

fare board, which was initially

set up in 2012.

Transgenders would get

free ration till June 2021, she

announced.

TENDER

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Bhubaneswar invites e-Tender for the Work(s) for Provision of False Ceiling, Aluminium Partition & Miscellaneous Civil Works in Medical Record Department (MRD) at Hospital Complex, AIIMS, Bhubaneswar (NIT No.: AIIMS/BBSR/Engg./012 /2020-21). The detailed Tender Document along with Last Date & Time of Submission of Tender can be viewed & downloaded from the website www.aiimsbhubaneswar.nic.in, www.tenderwizard.com/AIIMSBBSSR & CPP Portal Sd/- Executive Engineer(Civil) I/C AIIMS, Bhubaneswar

Liquor shops open in Chennai amid increasing Covid cases

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHENNAI, 17 AUGUST

would be issued a day. Use of face masks has been made mandatory. Liquor shops in containment zones would continue to remain shut.

TASMAC shops were all-

owed to open on 7 May in areas

other than those under Chen-

nai Corporation limits, prom-

pting tipplers to make a bee-

line in the border areas of the

neighbouring districts to get

their daily quota.

With TASMAC manage-

ment allowing opening of

retail vending shops from

Tuesday, it has come as a big

relief to the tipplers in the city.

Ever since the shops were

closed after the outbreak of

the pandemic in the third



week of March, tipplers were left high and dry with those selling in blackmarkets making a killing.

Relief came in the form of

the government allowing



shops to function in the bor-

der districts of Chennai from

5 May. Since then, the sales,

especially on Saturdays tak-

ing into account the complete

lockdown on all Sundays,

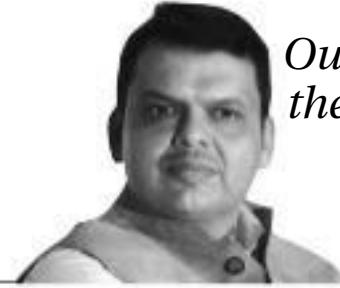
touched close to Rs 150 crore mark. This weekend, with Saturday (Independence Day) and Sunday being holidays, the sales almost touched Rs 250 crore.

The sales from TASMAC is one of the major revenue earners for the government with the annual sales crossing Rs 30,000 crore.

However, it was likely to be impacted slightly this year in view of the lockdown.

Meanwhile, Tamil Nadu today saw the death of 120 patients, taking the fatality rate in the state to 5,886. Following the trend of increasing cases in Chennai, the Greater Chennai Corporation has increased testing.

nai reported 1,185 cases in the past 24 hours. The city again started showing signs of increase in daily loads while it was below 1,000 for the past few days.



Our doctors are working really hard. They are putting their lives into danger and working day and night for us

TAKING DIM VIEW OF SENA MP SANJAY RAUT'S REPORTED REMARKS ON DOCTORS

THUMBNAILS



A social worker showers rose petals as he pays tribute to freedom fighter Madan Lal Dhingra during the 111th anniversary of his execution in Amritsar on Monday. **AFP**

Ex-JD(U) minister joins RJD: Former JD(U) leader Shyam Rajak, who has been sacked from the Bihar Cabinet, returned to his old party RJD headed by Lalu Prasad on Monday. Rajak was removed from the Cabinet and was also expelled from the JD(U) on Sunday for six years for his anti-party activities. **PTI**

'Virtual Jana Gana Mana' by Bharatbala: 'The Virtual National Anthem' hit Google Search, the YouTube masthead and Doordarshan on Independence Day. It was a larger than life coming together of voices of Indians - from the mountains of Arunachal Pradesh to the expanses of the Thar desert, launched on India's 74th Independence Day. **SNS**

Senior journalist NJ Nair passes away: Senior journalist N J Nair died in Thiruvananthapuram early on Monday after a cardiac arrest. He was 58. He was deputy editor of *The Hindu*. Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan and CM Pinarayi Vijayan were among those who condoled the death. **PTI**

Baghjan gas well fire: In the first successful step towards dousing the blaze at Baghjan gas well in Assam, a blow out preventer could be placed at the mouth of the well, OIL said on Monday. A major blowout took place on 27 May. **PTI**

Elgar case: The NIA on Monday opposed bail plea of activist Sudha Bharadwaj, arrested in the Elgar Parishad-Koregaon Bhima case, in the Bombay HC saying her ailments were not serious nature. **PTI**

NHRC summons UP CS, DGP for arrest of Guj Dalits

AHMEDABAD, 17 AUGUST

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has summoned the Chief Secretary and the Director General of Police (DGP) of Uttar Pradesh for not responding to its notices in the matter of illegal arrest of Dalit activists in 2017. Around 45 Dalit activists from Gujarat were de-trained from Uttar Pradesh bound Sabarmati Express at Jhansi station in July 2017 as they were carrying a 125-kg soap to be delivered to chief minister Yogi Adityanath.

The 125-kg soap, two-and-a-half feet long and one-and-a-half feet breadth with a depth of one feet and Gautam Buddha's face embossed on it, was made by Dalits of Gujarat in protest against the UP administration giving soap and shampoo to a Dalit family in Khushinagar asking them to cleanse themselves up ahead of chief minister Yogi's visit to their hamlet.

Taking cognisance of a complaint by Dalit activists against their illegal arrests, the NHRC had served notice to the Superintendent of Police (Railways) Jhansi asking him to submit a report in September 2017. As no response was sent by the SP, the NHRC had thereafter, in November 2019, asked the Uttar Pradesh Chief Secretary and the DGP to submit the requisite report on the illegal arrests of the Dalit activists.

No report has been submitted by the two top officials till now, the NHRC has summoned the Chief Secretary and the DGP to appear before it in person on 28 September to produce the requisite report. **SNS**

Merger of 6 BSP MLAs: SC defers hearing on plea

Plea seeks stay on Raj Speaker's decision allowing MLAs to merge with Congress

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 17 AUGUST

The Supreme Court on Monday deferred to 24 August the hearing on a plea of a BJP MLA seeking a stay on the Rajasthan Speaker's decision that had allowed six BSP MLAs to merge with the Congress.

A bench headed by Justice Arun Mishra, in a hearing conducted through video conferencing, was apprised of the fact the Rajasthan High Court, which has been hearing the politically sensitive dispute, has been closed till Wednesday.

It has been reported that the Chief Justice of the High Court has tested positive for Covid-19 and the functioning of the HC has been postponed till 19 August.

The bench, which also comprised Justices BR Gavai and Krishna Murari, took note of the submissions of lawyer Sunil Fernandes that the High Court had started dictating its order in the dispute on Friday but it could not be completed.

The top court then decided to adjourn the hearing on the plea of BJP MLA Madan



Dilawar for hearing on the issue to 24 August.

Earlier, the top court had refused to pass any interim order on the plea of the BJP MLA after it was told that the High Court has been dealing with the case.

The BJP lawmaker has said that these six Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) MLAs have been wrongly allowed by the assembly speaker to merge with the ruling Congress party.

Dilawar has challenged the high court's order which had refused to stay the functioning of these six MLAs as Congress legislators.

Earlier, the apex court had allowed the withdrawal of a petition filed by six Rajasthan MLAs seeking transfer of the plea pending against them in the high court to the apex

court.
Senior advocate Harish Salve, appearing for Dilawar, had said that the matter can go on before the high court but the issue is what is to be done in the meantime.

Salve, while referring to the September last year order of merger passed by the Speaker, had said there is a curious situation as the BSP is saying that they have not merged.

He had said that the apex court should stay the Speaker's order of September last year.

Senior advocate SC Mishra, appearing for BSP, had said the six MLAs had gone to the speaker saying they want to merge and the Speaker "straightaway" passed order of merger.

He had said in the Rajasthan assembly also, these MLAs are not following the whip of BSP and moreover, BSP is a national party and split, if any, has to be at the national level.

Dilawar has challenged in the apex court the August 6 order of a division bench of high court which had disposed of his plea against the order of a single judge, who had refused to stay the func-

tioning of these six MLAs as Congress legislators.

The single judge of the high court had earlier not granted any interim relief and refused to put a stay on the participation of six MLAs in the proceedings of the House as Congress legislators.

On July 30, the high court had sought response of the Assembly Speaker and its secretary on the pleas challenging the induction of the six MLAs into the Congress.

Two petitions have been filed in the high court, one by Dilawar and the other by BSP National Secretary SC Mishra.

Sandeep Yadav, Wajib Ali, Deepchand Kheria, Lakhman Meena, Jogendra Awana and Rajendra Gudha contested and won the 2018 assembly election on a BSP ticket but they defected to Congress in September 2019.

They had submitted an application for the merger on September 16 last year and the Speaker allowed their induction into the Congress two days later.

The merger was a boost to the Ashok Gehlot-led government as the tally of the Congress increased to 107 in the house of 200.

Rahul, Priyanka slam UP govt, say caste violence, crimes against women rising



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 17 AUGUST

appropriate action, Priyanka Gandhi alleged.

"The Uttar Pradesh government should review the law-and-order system and take every step to ensure the safety of women," she said.

The Congress has been alleging that the law-and-order situation is deteriorating in Uttar Pradesh under the BJP rule, a charge denied by the state dispensation.

HC refuse plea for CBI, ED probe against Priyanka

The Delhi High Court Monday refused to entertain a plea seeking direction to the CBI and the ED to take action against Congress leaders Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and Milind Deora and Yes bank co-founder Rana Kapoor for alleged cheating and fraud.

Justice Vibhu Bakshu dismissed the petition filed by an NGO alleging that Vadra sold a painting of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to Kapoor for Rs 2 crore even though it was the property of the Congress party.

In a Facebook post in Hindi, Priyanka Gandhi also hit out at the Uttar Pradesh government over the issue of security of women. "Bulandshahr, Hapur, Lakhimpur Kheri and now Gorakhpur. Such repeated incidents have proven that the Uttar Pradesh government has completely failed in providing security to women," the Congress general secretary said, referring to reports of crimes against women in these areas. There is no fear of law in the minds of criminals in Uttar Pradesh, she said, adding that as a result, gruesome incidents of crime are taking place against women.

The police and administration are neither able to provide security nor take

2 LeT terrorists, 3 cops killed in encounter at Baramulla



Two terrorists belonging to Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) outfits were on Monday killed in an encounter after they attacked and killed three security personnel, including two CRPF jawans and a special police officer (SPO) of J&K Police at a check post at Kreer in north Kashmir's Baramulla district. The group of terrorists was tracked down and the encounter started soon after they shot the three cops in the morning while they were manning a check post of the CRPF on the strategic road about 50 kms from Srinagar.

The martyred CRPF personnel have been identified as Constable Lavkush Sudarshan Sharma and Driver Khurshed Khan. Both were of the 119 battalion and were from Bihar. The SPO has been identified as Muzaffar Ahmad and was a resident of Kashmir. The SPO identified

A massive search operation was launched to track down the terrorists and sniffer dogs were also put on their trail. Two terrorists were killed in the encounter that ensued and one more was suspected to be hiding

on the spot whereas the two critically injured CRPF jawans succumbed in hospital.

It is learnt that one AK rifle, two pistols and an INSAS rifle, which the terrorists had snatched from the cops, have been recovered from the two killed terrorists. The joint operation against terrorists was in progress. A massive search operation was launched to track down the terrorists and sniffer dogs were also put on their trail. Two terrorists were killed in the encounter that ensued and one more was suspected to be hiding. Meanwhile two Army soldiers were injured when the encounter resumed in the evening between security forces and a terrorist who was holed up after killing of two terrorists. Army, CRPF and Police have cordoned the area. One of the killed terrorist was a top commander of the LeT.

SNS

India prepares roadmap to promote defence exports using diplomatic channels

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 17 AUGUST

Defence minister Rajnath Singh earlier this month had unveiled a major policy decision, announcing imposition of a phase-wise ban on import of 101 military platforms and weapons systems with an aim to promote the domestic defence industry.

that the domestic defence industry will hold web interactions with the representatives of friendly countries to figure out what kind of products and platforms they require.

"We are preparing country-wise profiles of products, weapons and platforms which are probably needed by our friendly countries. So we are now planning to start web interaction led by the industry," Kumar said.

Raj Kumar, secretary, department of defence production, said at a webinar

public sector undertakings), industry, will then figure out what is in the store for us to promote there for exports," he said.

Kumar said the government will be standing side by side with the domestic industry through its defence attachés, embassies and diplomatic channels to promote exports.

To promote indigenous production, the defence ministry on 9 August announced restrictions on import of 101 weapons and military platforms including light combat

helicopters, conventional submarines and cruise missiles under a staggered timeline till 2024.

Kumar said a second list of import-restricted defence items will also be notified.

"This is the first list we are examining and then a second list will also come. We expect you (industry) to come forward and start investing to meet our requirements," he said at the webinar - 'Army Make Projects 2020' - organised by FICCI.

The senior official said as successful domestic bidders move to the defence equipment production stage, his department will share their details with the Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu defence corridor authorities, who "will compete in attracting your units to their respective states".

In a Facebook post in Hindi, Priyanka Gandhi also hit out at the Uttar Pradesh government over the issue of security of women. "Bulandshahr, Hapur, Lakhimpur Kheri and now Gorakhpur. Such repeated incidents have proven that the Uttar Pradesh government has completely failed in providing security to women," the Congress general secretary said, referring to reports of crimes against women in these areas. There is no fear of law in the minds of criminals in Uttar Pradesh, she said, adding that as a result, gruesome incidents of crime are taking place against women.

The police and administration are neither able to provide security nor take

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that a person namely **Vishnu S/o Lina Munda R/o Village- Rapa Chay Bagan Siliguri, West Bengal** about 30 years of age had been found dead in a Bus No. HR38X5174, Near Observation Home, Majnu ka Tila, Delhi. In this regard a vide has been registered with DD No: 21-A/u/s 174 CrPC dated 13.08.2020 at P.S. Timarpur, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to identify the deceased person but no clue has come to light so far. The description of the UIDB is as under:

Name: Vishnu, **Gender:** Male, **Age:** about 30 years, **Height:** 5'5", **Complexion:** Shallow, **Face:** Long, **Built:** Thin, **Wearing:** Light grey colour t-shirt, pant and yellow colour slippers in his feet.

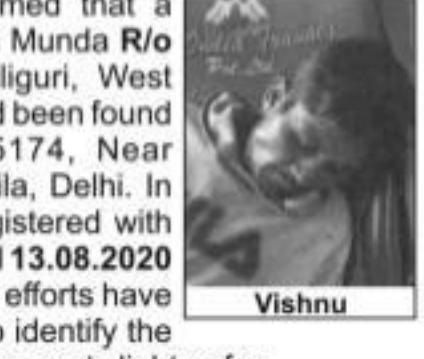
If anyone has any information about his relatives, kindly inform the SHO/Timarpur, Delhi.

E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.in

Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641

Fax : 011-24368639

DP/465/N/2020



Vishnu

SHO P.S. Timarpur, Delhi. Ph. No. 011-23812734, 23814421

India, Nepal discuss bilateral projects amid border dispute

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, 17 AUGUST



tion of 46,301 earthquake affected houses (out of 50,000 houses committed by India) in Gorkha and Nuwakot districts, the operationalisation of Motihari-Amlekhganj cross-border petroleum products pipeline, the Integrated Check Post at Biratnagar and the High Impact Community Development Projects. Nepal also noted with appreciation COVID-19-related assistance, including medicines and medical equipment, rendered by India.

The ties between the two countries came under strain after Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated an 80-km-long strategically crucial road connecting the Lipulekh pass with Dharchula in Uttarakhand on 8 May.

Nepal protested the inauguration of the road claiming that it passed through its territory.

Days later, Nepal came out with the new map showing Lipulekh, Kalapani and Limpiyadhura as its territories. In June, Nepal's Parliament approved the new political map of the country featuring areas which India maintains belong to it.

In its reaction, India termed as untenable the "artificial enlargement" of territorial claims by the neighbouring country.

Covid-19: 4 more die in Siliguri

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

SILIGURI, 17 AUGUST

Four persons who had tested positive for Covid-19 died in Siliguri in the past 24 hours.

A 70-year-old resident of Mainaguri Jalpaiguri district died in the Desun Hospital at Kawakhali today. It is further learnt that an 85-year-old resident of NJP area died in a private nursing home yesterday.

Hospital (NBMCH) today, while a 62-year-old resident of Subhas Pally died yesterday.

A 65-year-old resident of Mainaguri Jalpaiguri district died in the Desun Hospital at Kawakhali today. It is further learnt that an 85-year-old resident of NJP area died in a private nursing home yesterday.

59 fresh cases in

Covid management system in 3 govt hospitals: Mamata

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

KOLKATA, 17 AUGUST

The new system will provide detailed information about the health condition of Covid patients to their relatives online

patient is critical or moderate or on ventilation and all other details.

Assuring that the state's health infrastructure facilities are adequate to handle the Covid patients, state chief secretary Rajiva Sinha said that the government is maintaining complete transparency in the Covid treatment process and patients have been allowed to speak

Dignity restored?

In its judgment of 14 August, the Supreme Court found civil rights lawyer Prashant Bhushan guilty of criminal contempt of court by scandalising the judiciary through two tweets: one with the picture of Chief Justice SA Bobde seated on a Harley Davidson motorcycle bike in Nagpur hinting the country's top judge was having a joy ride while keeping the Supreme Court under lockdown; the other alleged the apex court contributed to the destruction of democracy in the last six years and the last four CJIs played a role in that. "The strong arm of the law must, in the name of public interest and public justice, strike a blow on Bhushan who challenges the supremacy of the rule of law by fouling the stream," observed a Bench of Justices Arun Mishra, BR Gavai and Krishna Murari in their judgment. Finding the tweets had the effect of destabilising the very foundation of this important pillar of Indian democracy, the judgment said, "There is no manner of doubt that the tweets tend to shake public confidence in the institution of judiciary." Senior advocate Sanjay Hegde expressed the view that if the two tweets can bring down the court's authority, "then it is not as strong as we imagined." A former Chief Justice of India, RM Lodha, wondered why the Supreme Court moved so fast to hear the suo motu criminal contempt case against Bhushan via a virtual court hearing amid a pandemic. The case could have been taken up as soon as the court resumed physical hearings.

A criminal contempt matter is between the court and the contemnor. No third party is involved. The contemnor should be fully assured that he is being provided procedural fairness and full hearing which a virtual court cannot. It is disheartening the court acted in this manner. Justice Gavai, who wrote the judgment, pointed out the Constitution had given a special role to constitutional courts of the country. The Supreme Court is a protector of fundamental rights of citizens and is also endowed with a duty to keep the other pillars of democracy, the Executive and the Legislature, within constitutional bounds. If an attack is made to shake the confidence that the public has in the judiciary, such an attack must be dealt with firmly. "When there appears some scheme and design to bring about results which have the tendency of damaging the confidence in our judicial system and demoralise the judges of the highest court by making malicious attacks, those interested in maintaining high standards of fearless, impartial and unbending justice will have to stand firmly. If such an attack is not dealt with firmly, with requisite degree of firmness, it may affect the national honour and prestige in the comity of nations. Fearless and impartial courts of justice are the bulwark of a healthy democracy and the confidence in them cannot be permitted to be impaired by malicious attacks upon them," the judgment said. Respect and dignity of the judiciary ought not be demanded from citizens on the threat of criminal contempt. It should be earned.

Champion departs

There are many strands to the Mahendra Singh Dhoni story carefully woven over the years to create the person who has now decided to say goodbye to international cricket. Of these, the one repeated most often is of the young lad from a small town who made it big in world cricket, which of course ignores the fact that many Indian cricketers before and during his time had similar starting points. Neither Amritsar, to which Bishen Singh Bedi belonged, nor Chandigarh which produced Kapil Dev nor even Mysore which gave cricket the phenomenon named B S Chandrasekhar, were exactly cradles of cricket at the time these stalwarts first donned whites. But such is the spin imparted by publicity machines that Dhoni's origins in Ranchi are presented as almost a unique instance of a small town, which by the time he was drafted into international cricket was already a state capital, having produced a champion. That he was a champion can never be disputed. His exploits on the cricket field bear little repetition, and certainly the last-ball six that gave India the 2011 World Cup has been further immortalised now by another champion, Sunil Gavaskar, saying that is the last thing he would like to see before his eyes close for ever.

The other strand to the Dhoni story is of his longevity and his physical fitness. But it cannot be overlooked that Dhoni's Test career lasted a mere nine years, while his One-Day International career span stretched to a few months short of 15. Kapil Dev, in contrast, played both Tests and one-dayers for 16 years, and S Venkataraghavan for nearly 19 and neither, to immediate recall, was ever dropped for lack of fitness. Indeed, while Dhoni deserves praise for marshalling his physical strengths intelligently, as he continued to play international cricket for a full five years after retiring from Test cricket, note must also be made of the fact that at least some of his efforts at conserving himself must have been propelled by a desire to be of value to his team in the Indian Premier League, an engagement he will likely continue with. Indeed, the most memorable instance of the normally unflappable Dhoni losing his cool – and storming on to the field where he had no business at the time – occurred during a tight IPL game between Chennai Super Kings and Rajasthan Royals.

Of course, all this must be overshadowed by his huge contribution to his nation's cricket, first in establishing India as the top Test team and then in securing two memorable World Cup triumphs. As he bids adieu, it is time to pay tribute to an exceptional cricketer and to refresh one's memories with images of his outstanding stroke play and deft glove work.

Collateral Damage

There is the worry of reputational damage from the idea that India gave in to US sanctions, a departure from the past. China's growing inroads in Iran could make Indian projects there more unviable. The largest worry is that Chabahar, the enduring symbol of India-Iran friendship, could become collateral damage in a larger proxy war between the US and China



The Iranian government decided to drop India from the project to construct a rail line from Chabahar port to Zahedan along the border with Afghanistan, and proceed on its own, citing delays from the Indian side in funding and starting the project. "Iranian Railways will proceed without India's assistance, using approximately \$400 million from the Iranian National Development Fund," said the report. The Indian government has, however, denied the report.

Chabahar port was being jointly developed by India, Iran and Afghanistan. The three countries consider the port, located on the Indian Ocean in the Sistan and Baluchistan province of Iran, as a gateway to opportunities for trade with central Asian nations. Easily accessible from India's western coast, Chabahar port is increasingly seen as a counter to Pakistan's Gwadar Port, which is being developed with Chinese help. This is a big loss to India.

The port development project along Iran's southern coast in the Sistan-Baluchestan province has been a part of discussions between New Delhi and Tehran since 2003. State-owned IRCON International (IRCON) Limited was associated with the rail project even as India acted quickly to develop Chabahar port facilities. Over the years, the Chabahar project has grown, and now envisages a port, a free trade zone, the 628-km railway line to Zahedan, and the little over 1,000-km track to Sarakhs on the border with Turkmenistan.

The Chabahar project is ambitious and will require deep pockets, but New Delhi has always weighed its strategic benefits above costs. India-Iran relations are historic and New Delhi has sought to maintain these ties in the face of opposition from Iran's adversaries – the United

States, Saudi Arabia and Israel. The Chabahar project ties India and Iran together as New Delhi deals with its difficult neighbour to the west, Pakistan. A major trade and connectivity hub on Iran's coast not only gives India an alternative route to Afghanistan, bypassing Pakistan, but also has the potential to provide an Indian strategic counter to Pakistan's Gwadar port being developed by China right next door to Chabahar. The Chabahar trade zone could be an important weigh station for India's energy imports and food and material exports coming from Kandla and Mundra ports. And the rail project will allow India an independent corridor not only to Afghanistan, which Pakistan has denied it, but also to Central Asia and Russia someday.

While the Chabahar port development moved forward in the last five years, the railway line languished. After several threats and appeals to India, Iran said it was going ahead to build the Chabahar-Zahedan line on its own last month, with approximately \$400 million from the National Development Fund of Islamic Republic of Iran.

Despite the attractions, India's investment in Chabahar has always been held hostage to international policy shifts in the last two decades. It placed heavy sanctions on Iran until nuclear talks between the P-5+1 (the US, the UK, France, China, Russia and Germany) that began in 2006, ended successfully with the signing of the Joint Compre-

hensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in 2015. As a result, while India continued to negotiate for Chabahar, it was not until after the sanctions were lifted that talks could make headway.

In 2016, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and Afghan President Ashraf Ghani signed the Chabahar agreement, which included the Trilateral Agreement on Establishment of International Transport and Transit Corridor between Afghanistan, Iran and India. It also included the port project and the railway line to be built and funded by IRCON for \$1.6 billion.

In 2018, however, US President Donald Trump overturned the JCPOA, and re-imposed stringent sanctions on Iran. This meant India's energy imports from Iran, which was its third largest supplier, dropped to zero. Bilateral trade, which depended on a rupee-rial exchange mechanism also stopped. The US gave Chabahar port and rail line a special waiver or "carve-out", but the sanctions made it very difficult for companies dealing with the US to participate in the project.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has disclosed that India's ONGC Videsh Ltd (OVL) has been cut out of the development of an Iranian gas field project, Farzad B; both sides had been in talks since 2009.

The project, which will now go to an Iranian company, had also floundered due to a combination of US sanctions, Iran's changing conditions and fluctuating prices, as well as India's

delayed responses. On the Chabahar-Zahedan rail project, the MEA said IRCON had completed its feasibility studies by December 2019, three years after the memorandum of understanding was signed, but that it had not heard back from Iran.

In the meanwhile, Iranian Railway authorities have begun laying tracks. An Iranian official said, "In the absence of an active Indian engagement and partnership, it is currently under construction by Iranian funding and engineering capacities." Both New Delhi and Tehran have left the door open for IRCON to return to the project at a later date, but for the moment, India is not a part of the railway construction.

The announcements on the two projects come even as news filters in of a China-Iran 25-year partnership for \$400 billion to build infrastructure and energy resources in Iran, giving the impression that Iran may be relying more and more on Beijing.

India's stakes in Chabahar remain strong, and no matter who builds the railway line, Indian trade could still find its way to Afghanistan and Central Asia. India's monetary losses are minimal, as it had not invested money or material on the rail line yet. However, there is the worry of reputational damage from the idea that India gave in to US sanctions, a departure from the project.

China's growing inroads in Iran could make Indian projects there more unviable. The largest worry is that Chabahar, the enduring symbol of India-Iran friendship, could become collateral damage in a larger proxy war between the US and China. India should have funded the rail project to remain a stakeholder in Chabahar Island to counter China and Pakistan in nearby Gwadar.

A MEMBER OF THE **ANN**
ASIAN VOICES

Anxiety over anaesthesia

Anaesthesia has evolved in tandem with improvements in surgical care and expertise over the years. On Oct 16, 1846, Dr William Morton demonstrated the first public administration of ether anaesthetic at the operating theatre of Massachusetts General Hospital. This marked a milestone in anaesthesia and is celebrated as World Anaesthesia Day.

Despite higher awareness of the role of anaesthesia and anaesthesiologists in patient care during surgery, there remains a lot of anxiety and myths among patients whenever they or their loved ones are scheduled for surgery. Let us look at some of the more common ones that I have encountered over the years from conversations with patients. I have met my surgeon and I know what procedure that I am undergoing. However, I have no idea about anaesthesia. Do not worry. You will always meet your anaesthesiologist prior to surgery. This could be at the anaesthesia clinic if there is one at the hospital, the ward where you are admitted to the day before surgery, or even in the operating room for daycare surgery. Irrespective of when or where, one of the most important aspects in overall care is what transpires well before the first anaesthesia is even rendered. Pre-operative assessment remains the most important step whereby a care plan is made taking into account the patient's overall medical status, the type of surgery that will be performed, and steps to be taken after surgery to ensure the patient remains as stable as possible. The anaesthesiologist will ask a series of questions; conduct a physical examination and assess your airway; review your investigation results; then explain the steps in

The Star

administering the anaesthetic before getting your consent that will be documented in a hospital form. Take this opportunity to ask your anaesthesiologist as many questions as you wish. If you have had surgery before and encountered issues, do highlight them to your anaesthesiologist so that adequate preparations are made in advance. These could be severe post-operative nausea or vomiting, or an unplanned ICU admission that requires additional stay in the hospital.

When can I eat? This appears like a trivial matter but it is a common question. Due to the need for preoperative fasting to minimise the risk of aspiration of gastric content during induction of anaesthesia and also for surgical reasons whereby bowel preparations are important during gastrointestinal surgeries, most patients will like to eat as soon as they are allowed to. In most straightforward cases, once the effect of general anaesthesia has worn off, which typically would be two to three hours after surgery, you will be allowed to consume clear fluids and if there is no nausea or vomiting, a cup of milk or chocolate drink. Eating solids is usually delayed as some patients may throw up if given food too early. For some surgeries especially those involving the bowel, a prolonged period of fasting post-surgery may be required to allow surgical stitches to heal.

China's growing inroads in Iran could make Indian projects there more unviable. The largest worry is that Chabahar, the enduring symbol of India-Iran friendship, could become collateral damage in a larger proxy war between the US and China. India should have funded the rail project to remain a stakeholder in Chabahar Island to counter China and Pakistan in nearby Gwadar.

WELCOME VERDICT

SIR, In a significant judgment, the Supreme Court on Tuesday ruled that daughters will have equal rights in the parental property as a son even if their father died before the Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act 2005 came into force. The Supreme Court has placed the Hindu woman's right to inherit ancestral property beyond the pale of ambiguity. It is a welcome ruling and a logical culmination of a long process to weed out patriarchal prejudice. It was an exercise that was speeded up soon after Independence, with the framers of the Constitution inscribing the promise of gender equality in the founding document of the nation.

The Hindu Succession Act, 1956, made inroads into the male-dominated system. Though women didn't get equal rights in property, the law made it possible for them to inherit property. While the rest of India continued with the discriminatory practice, some states such as Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka amended the law, giving equal rights to daughters. It was in this light that Parliament amended the Act in 2005 to give equal rights to daughters. But due to conflicting verdicts delivered by courts on retrospectivity of the amendment, daughters continued to be discriminated against. Maintaining that daughters cannot be deprived of their right to equality, the Supreme Court has now ruled that the 2005 amendment would be applicable to them, irrespective of whether they were born before or after it.

Yours, etc., Abhijit Roy,
Jamshedpur, 13 August.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR editor@thestatesman.com

Thank you and goodbye, MSD



SIR, Over the 15 years that he conquered the international cricket stage, fans had come to expect the unexpected from Mahendra Singh Dhoni. Even so, he managed to serve up a bolt from the blue on Saturday when on a relaxed 1-Day evening, after completing his first practice session with CSK teammates, Dhoni bowed out with a typically cryptic message on Instagram. Within minutes, his CSK and former India teammate, Suresh Raina, also followed suit.

Dhoni's exit marks the end of an era for Indian cricket. His numbers are staggering, but they don't begin to capture the impact of the superstar from Ranchi whose canny captaincy, ice-cool demeanour and unorthodox brilliance paved the way for some of Indian cricket's most memorable moments.

If he plays in the Indian Premier League (IPL) in the UAE from Sept 19, as indications suggest, the spotlight will firmly be on Dhoni and CSK's campaign. In Melbourne in late December 2014, he pulled a rabbit out of the hat by announcing his Test retirement moments after his unbeaten 24 had played an important role in India drawing the game. A

shrewd cricketing brain, canny leadership skills in the shorter formats, an effective wicket-keeping technique, a sledgehammer of a bat and unwavering fortitude in pressure situations together marked his destined rise to the top. It was in September 2007, that the young, long-haired Ranchi boy shyly landed as the new captain of India, at the

start of a new tournament, the World T20 in Johannesburg. India's batting stalwarts like Sachin Tendulkar, Rahul Dravid and Sourav Ganguly had all given the tournament a miss. They would not have realised they were, in a way, abdicating the throne. Dhoni became Indian cricket's biggest star as India won the tournament beating Pakistan in the

final, and T20 became the new rage.

That tournament, and India's win, reset the framework of international cricket, and Dhoni was at the centre of that grid. The 2011 World Cup win in India marked the acme of Dhoni's achievements as leader and finisher, and that winning six is etched in India's collective consciousness. Having become the biggest superstar in Indian cricket since the heady days of Sachin Tendulkar, Dhoni became the face of calm on the cricket field and a recluse off it.

Now, Indian cricket has years to discuss the secrets of Dhoni's longevity and the impeccable legacy he leaves behind. He redefined the concept of the Indian limited overs match-winner, averaging 100-plus in successful run chases and 69 when India won. He became the only Indian captain to win all three ICC trophies. He also took India to the top of the Test rankings. The numbers, while significant, do not define Dhoni's aura. At his peak, he was relentless in his quest for victory and strong-shouldered both as batsman and leader.

Thank you, MSD, for giving us so many brilliant cricketing moments.

Yours, etc., Sanjay Chopra,
Mohali, 16 August.

HARSHA KAKAR

Multiple perceptions exist on the possible impact of upcoming US Presidential elections on Indo-US and US-China relations, especially when India and China are involved in a prolonged standoff. Comments have increased in intensity since the Democratic US Presidential hopeful, Joe Biden, nominated Kamala Harris, as his running mate for Vice President. The policies of Donald Trump, currently seeking his second term, his relations with India and China, as also his views on trade ties are well known, while those of Biden and Harris are unclear.

A known devil is always better than an unknown devil and that holds true for Trump. On the other hand, statements and views projected during electioneering change when responsibility dawns. National policies are formulated by the team, an elected President brings to the White House, rather than on electioneering statements. This would be the scenario with Biden.

Barrack Obama was a Democrat and Indo-US relations flourished under his watch. His two visits to India strengthened relationships and enhanced strategic cooperation. Expecting this to change with the current Democratic candidates in the fray is unlikely. Doubts arise due to statements and comments made by Biden and Harris during their electioneering.

Harris made headlines when she questioned abrogation of Article 370 and enactment of the Citizenship Amendment Act. She had stated during one of her presidential nomination speeches, "We have to remind the Kashmiris that they are not alone in the world. We are keeping a track on the situation." She had also objected to External Affairs Minister Jaishankar cancelling his meeting with US lawmakers because of the presence of Pramila Jayapal, stating, "It's wrong for any foreign government to tell Congress which members are allowed in meetings on Capitol Hill."

Most of her statements on human rights in India are more symbolic than based on strong beliefs, as is common with politicians vying for the top chair. Her skipping the 'Howdy Modi' event was due to her disagreements with the Trump administration and upcoming Democratic presidential nomination rather than differences of opinion with Prime Minister Modi.

US poll outcome will not impact India ties



Politicians across the globe act similarly and Harris is no exception. She was Biden's strongest critic during the presidential primaries but now sings his praises. Biden nominating her as his running mate makes electoral sense. About 1.4 million Indian Americans are expected to vote this year. The fact that Harris harps on her Indian roots while displaying her African American identity would ensure crucial votes in swing states, especially as Biden's recent comments had pushed African American voters away.

Comments during electioneering or while addressing groups are more for satisfaction of vote banks and local audiences. These have no international ramifications. Biden had last month released his 'Agenda for Muslim-American' communities, seeking to win Muslim-American voters. In

the document he had referred to Uyghurs and Rohingyas. He had also mentioned Kashmir and questioned the Indian government on its policies in the region.

This document and subsequent comments led to strong objections from the Hindu American community. Within days, he changed direction and stated that he would strengthen US partnership with 'natural ally' India. Biden's announcement that he is seeking a single term and would pave the way for Harris for the next president won the hearts of the Indian American community. He has carefully played both sides.

Once elected, the president and his group of advisors work together to ensure defence of the country's national interests, which remain enduring. The well-known quote, ascribed to Lord Palmerston, holds

weight, "In international relations, there are no permanent friends or permanent enemies, only permanent interests."

Policies are drafted by career bureaucrats, who for decades have handled their responsibilities and are aware of the nation's threats and economic requirements. The top leader's perceptions may carry influence but will never compromise defending core national interests and maintaining ties with close allies. A leader's strong beliefs could result in comments on a few uncomfortable internal matters of allies but would never cross a nation's red lines.

Threats to a nation may change in levels of intensity, not vanish altogether. Alliances take time to develop and sustain. They cannot be dumped or ignored with change in leadership. Despite all the rambling by Trump,

NATO and all other alliances have remained intact. His views on the importance of strategic relations with India, need to dominate the Indo-Pacific, and countering a belligerent China have matured over his tenure. Biden has similar views. The difference in Trump's approach has been employing trade as a weapon of war, which has produced results and hurt the economies of China, Iran and Russia.

China and Iran may desire Trump's defeat, hoping for an end to the trade and pressure wars, which has damaged their economies and threatened their security. Russia would prefer a Trump victory, as despite his actions, he has always maintained a soft spot for Vladimir Putin. These nations would, in some form, attempt to influence elections, each for their own reasons.

Currently, the US faces two major threats, terrorism and China, neither of which will go away. India has a role in both and is thus a natural ally. Therefore, for India, there would not be much variation in ties, regardless of who occupies the chair.

In the Indo-Pacific, it is the US which needs Indian participation and hence relationships have deepened over time. The US also seeks to enhance its involvement in the Indian defence market. Attempting to pressure India on issues which bear little global relevance would suit neither country. On occasions, touchy subjects may be raised but they would be handled diplomatically. Trump had offered to broker talks between India and Pakistan but was diplomatically advised to stay away.

No nation can handle all its challenges alone. Allies are essential. India is a regional power. Hence, notwithstanding who wins the election, Indo-US relations would remain strong. If Trump is elected, India would know what to expect. If Biden is, then initial diplomacy would play a major role.

The writer is a retired Major-General of the Indian Army.

- All labourers should be included in the list of corona warriors. They should be treated on par with doctors, nurses and others.

- All daily wagers and workers who lost their earnings during lockdown should be compensated by the government. Recognising the importance of life of every Indian and their contribution to the growth of the nation, government should also provide adequate compensation to those who lost their lives, during these extremely difficult times.

- Government should ensure improvement in living conditions of labourers as well as their career progression, to be enforced by each employer. This unorganized sector should be given the status of organized sector for better working and living conditions.

- It was painful to see that few of these 19 crore workers had minimum basic education. It is imperative to have a programme where they and their children are educated.

- Currently, the private sector is riddled with massive inequality of wages between the labourers and the CEO of the company. This disparity should be narrowed. At least minimum salary should be guaranteed so that they can manage a reasonable living.

While lauding the government's programme of providing free food grain for 80 crore poor people, it is important that their plight get focused attention.

The writer is a distinguished scientist.

NO 28046

100 YEARS AGO

OCCASIONAL NOTE

The Report of the Foreign Missions of the United Free Church of Scotland for 1919 views with grave concern the difficulties caused by the abnormal rise in the eastern exchanges and by the increased cost of living throughout the world, but at the same times expresses sincere gratitude for the generous help that has made it possible to carry on all the work without serious abatement. The entire staff of Europeans, men and women, but not including 171 wives of missionaries, numbers 370, the same as in the previous year. The total Christian community numbers 210,631, and the number of pupils and students attending the 1,953 schools and colleges is 107,980. The various mission dispensaries had an attendance last year of over half-a-million patients; and 15,900 operations were performed. An interesting and gratifying feature of the financial situation is that the greater part of the missionary income is raised in the field, as Government grants, medical fees, and congregational offerings. Last year the revenue from this source amounted to pound 210,148, compared with pound 186,079 raised in Scotland. It is noted with satisfaction that the contributions from the Native Church per member per annum were at the rate of ten shillings per member, compared with three shillings per member contributed by the Home Church for foreign Missions. It appears from the report that there are 51 congregations in Scotland which contribute nothing to foreign Missions.

NEWS ITEMS

RAILWAY STATION SENSATION

Commotion was caused on Friday night at Unsani Railway Station on the Bengal-Nagpur Railway, which is only seven miles from Howrah, when the Howrah-Puri passenger train arrived there. As soon as the train stopped at midnight about ten passengers, some of whom were well dressed, hurriedly got down, and a number of C.I.D. officers who had followed these men from Howrah also alighted and raised an alarm. One of the ten men attempted to escape but he was soon arrested. Two of them who boarded the moving train, however got away. Eight, including a boy of 16, were arrested. They were armed with swords, daggers and bhoojalis. Some of the arrested men seemed to be high caste Hindus. They were all taken to Howrah.

THE NEW GOVERNING BODIES

Rangoon, Aug 17
The local Government resolution on the rules and regulations for the election of Burma's representatives on the Council of State and Legislative Assembly contains an appeal by the Lieutenant-Governor to the public of Burma to do all that within them lies to make these elections a real success. The Government officers are enjoined to spare no effort to that end. His Honour hopes there will be no dearth of candidates for any of the constituencies, and that Burma may be worthily represented on the new bodies. He recognises that owing to the distance of Delhi and Simla from Burma, members will have to make far greater sacrifices than with representatives of other provinces, but is confident that Burma does not lack public-spirited gentlemen.

VILLAGERS TERRORISED

Rangoon, Aug 17
From Amherst district a report of a recent case of dacoity reaches Rangoon, which has revealed a state of affairs almost unknown in present times. Four Chittagonians were robbed of Rs 355 in cash by a gang of armed dacoits on the way between Kampi and Ahmin, villages in Amherst district. The District Superintendent of Police on enquires arrested two men, and in the course of his report on the case said, all the villagers testified to the extreme danger of travelling south of the Amherst subdivision. It is infested with people with guns, and travellers travel this road in fear of their lives. Villagers who can give any information deny all knowledge for fear of being shot. There is hardly a village without unlicensed guns, and witnesses are intimidated to silence.

BOMBAY WORKMEN

Bombay, Aug 17
A meeting of mill workmen has passed a resolution demanding universal adult suffrage. The meeting was presided over by Lala Lajpuji Rai, and the original proposition before it was to ask for the franchise for textile labourers earning forty rupees per month or over. One of the speakers suggested an amendment that those getting ten rupees should be enfranchised. Another speaker moved a rider to the amendment to the effect that universal adult suffrage should be granted. The amended resolution, with the rider, was unanimously passed.

Unorganised warriors deserve more

DR J P GUPTA

The coronavirus pandemic created global chaos and fear, bringing the world to a standstill. The virus brought even the most advanced economies to a calamitous state. Scientists, doctors, policy makers and the best global brains were left in a state of helplessness. We saw everyone join hands to endure any amount of suffering to support respective governments in combating the emergency. Governments, policy makers, NGOs, doctors, nurses, common men and police played their roles remarkably well.

In India, the contribution of underprivileged labourers in making the lockdown successful by initially staying put at one location so that the virus did not spread was beyond exemplary. On the call of the Prime Minister for a total lockdown, underprivileged labourers were left stranded without places to stay. Within a few days of the lockdown, employers shut down operations and stopped paying them, and landlords threw them out. This happened despite the Prime Minister's appeal that all employees – permanent or daily-wagers - should be paid during the lockdown.

Employers blamed closure of their businesses (factories or construction sites) as reason for non-payment of salaries. The unfortunate labourers not only lost their wages but were left with no resources to feed themselves. They struggled to contact families in their villages to enquire about their health and well-being. They spent days sleeping on roads with no food, in the hope they would get relief when the lockdown was lift-



ed. It is the impoverished labourers who lost everything and were the most gravely affected. Their distress and agony are hard to express in words.

However, despite their state, many remained in cities obeying lockdown restrictions. But successive lockdowns exacerbated the uncertainty. Finally, they lost all hope and started to trudge to homes hundreds and thousands of km away in the scorching heat. Pregnant women, infants and the elderly were among those seen moving despite being severely famished, a sight so miserable that even the stone-hearted shed tears of compassion.

The question that arises in my

mind is who are the true corona warriors – doctors, nurses, police personnel, sanitary workers or NGOs? Yes, they all are. However, they all were performing their duties and were duly compensated for extra efforts. It is imperative to also laud some organisations and individuals who donated, but then they were not the ones tortured in utter and desperate desolation. Thus, in my view the underprivileged labourers are equally corona warriors because despite their suffering they did not move in crowds till the time they could resist. But for their sacrifice and suffering, we would never have come to terms with the war on coronavirus.

Doctors, nurses, policemen and

volunteers were all showered with petals in appreciation of their services. However, now we should acknowledge these unsung warriors as it is high time that the sacrifice and torture that underprivileged labourers endured is recognized. They are the true pillars of our industrial sector. It is their productivity which determines the size of output and stirs manufacturing growth. In other words, they are the true 'Sherpas' for India's industrial growth.

More than 19 crore daily wage labourers have been in a despicable state since lockdown and it is high time that their morale and self-esteem is raised. In view of this, I submit the following suggestions:

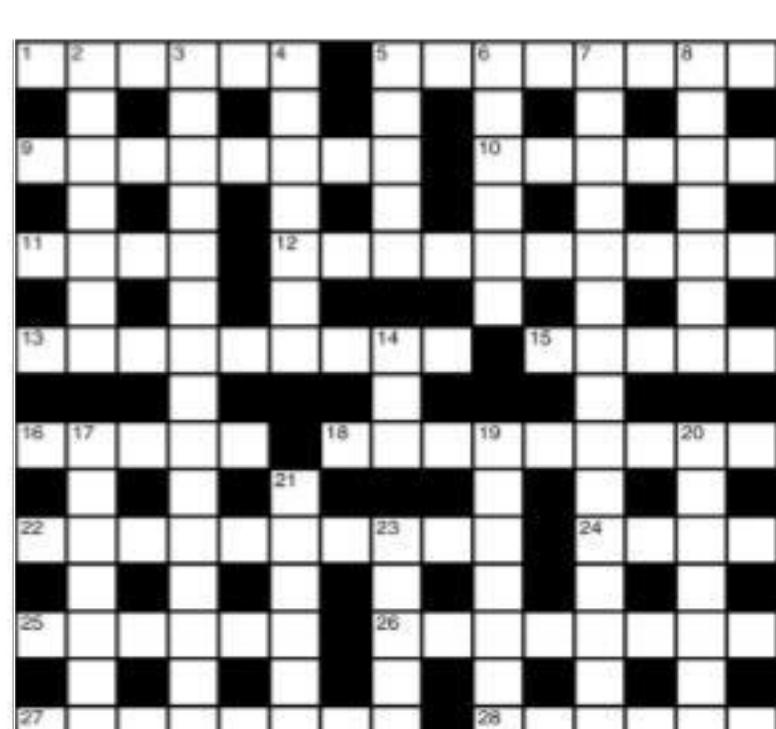
- It was painful to see that few of these 19 crore workers had minimum basic education. It is imperative to have a programme where they and their children are educated.

- Currently, the private sector is riddled with massive inequality of wages between the labourers and the CEO of the company. This disparity should be narrowed. At least minimum salary should be guaranteed so that they can manage a reasonable living.

While lauding the government's programme of providing free food grain for 80 crore poor people, it is important that their plight get focused attention.

The writer is a distinguished scientist.

CROSSWORD



YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION														
A	O	B	B	A	S	P	B							
G	A	R	D	E	N	I	N							
E	M	N	R	A	L	A								
D	R	O	V	E	D	A	I	R	F	A	M			
L	F	I	C	T										
C	R	U	S	A	D	E	O	L	D	N	I	C	K	
A	C	L	E	N	N									
P	O	D	T	P	M	A	S	T	E	L	I			
O	E	A	E	F										
N	U	M	R	A	P	O	R	T	A	G	E			
U	R	E	R	E										
S	T	A	M	A	N	E	L	D	E	R	E			
I	N	D	I	T	N	O	A	D	R	E	A			
D	R	E	A	D	N	O	A	C	O	U	N			
E	D	A	O	D	E	R	E							

- ACROSS**
- Decide to have two couples doing twist – that's dispelled frostiness (2,4)
 - Non-white group embracing, totally, golf and tennis perhaps (4,4)
 - Mat somehow gets left outside in combat (8)
 - Greek character taking time to make special mark (6)
 - Deal with swarm returning (4)
 - Lecture is encouraging on war I roughly intervened (10)
 - Create a picture of about here (9)
 - In the wind at back of boat with clutch of eggs (5)
 - In board game, a possible way down when way up's a non-starter (5)
 - Fine example of how species (18)
- DOWN**
- Maybe destroyer's love for adult and for every person who loves (10)
 - Some ground needing bit of aftercare in retreat (4)
 - Transport making final journey to catch Southeastern (6)
 - Perhaps burglar's unskilled breaking into short opening passage (8)
 - Shilling amateur put in to get free painting (8)
 - Fed up with following when running out of breath (6)
 - Kill-or-cure? – then dies from the next remedies (7)
 - Antidotes from 11, 16 or 19 and 4, 15 and 24 (7-8)

- endlessly evolved (9)
- Qualifications of reactionary Rees-Mogg's faction set in stone (7)
- Blind tragic king's watery-eyed (5)
- Maid of Perth's a fool caught in a falsehood (6)
- Sulky reaction from 3 for a lapse on board? (5,3,2,1,4)
- Note about hospital department is something to remember (7)
- Some anthems not defined in ordinal (3)
- Before start of encryption there's scrambled codes, I see (7)
- Surface from Notts town moving one end of street to the other (7)
- Get held up in main procession with 25 (7)
- Alien was seen here and came in after mutating (6)
- Finally stop travel to see some lions? (5)

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



Travel and tourism industry should focus more on domestic travellers

PRS OBEROI
EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN, EIH LTD

THUMBNAILS

RBI lifts all restrictions on Bandhan Bank: Bandhan Bank on Monday said the Reserve Bank of India has fully withdrawn the restrictions imposed on the private sector lender for high promoter holding, nearly two years after imposing them. The restrictions included seeking prior approvals for network expansion, and also freezing managing director and chief executive officer Chandra Shekhar Ghosh's remuneration.

Virtual education fair: IDP Education, a global leader in international education services, hosting the biggest virtual education fair. The education fair started from 10 August and will continue till 10 October. Over 150 leading institutions from abroad interacting with Indian students and help them with their overseas education plan.

HDFC Bank: HDFC Bank Ltd has announced the launch of a first-of-its-kind product for the armed forces. Called "Shaurya KCC Card", this product comes with some unique features and eligibility criteria specially crafted for over 45 lakh Indian armed forces personnel.

SNS

GDP to shrink 16.5% in Apr-Jun qtr: SBI report

Earlier in May, SBI report had estimated Q1 FY21 GDP contraction at over 20%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 17 AUGUST

State Bank of India's research report Ecowrap expects the country's GDP to contract by 16.5 per cent during the first quarter of the current financial year.

Earlier in May, Ecowrap had estimated Q1 FY21 GDP contraction at over 20 per cent and now pegs it at much lower contraction of 16.5 per cent for the quarter, "though with the relevant caveats in the current uncertain scenario", the research report released today stated.

It said degrowth in corporate GVA (better than expected results of some financial and non-financial companies) has been significantly better than revenue degrowth in Q1 FY21 as far as the results of the listed companies are concerned.

So far, around 1,000 listed entities have announced their results for the first quarter. The results indicate more than 25 per cent decline in topline and more than 55 per cent

FINDINGS OF REPORT



» The report said degrowth in corporate GVA (better than expected results of some financial and non-financial companies) has been significantly better than revenue degrowth in Q1 FY21 as far as the results of the listed companies are concerned.

» It is interesting to men-

Also, the number of rural districts with less than 10 cases have reduced significantly. Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra have been impacted more severely with increasing coronavirus penetration in rural areas.

"These districts contribute mostly around 2.4 per cent of GSDP (gross state domestic product) of their respective states, indicating that cases are penetrating deep rural hinterlands," the report noted.

The report estimates total (GSDP) loss due to Covid-19 to be at 16.8 per cent of GSDP. State-wise analysis indicates that top 10 states accounted for 73.8 per cent of total GDP loss, with Maharashtra contributing 14.2 per cent of total loss followed by Tamil Nadu (9.2 per cent) and Uttar Pradesh (8.2 per cent), it said.

Subsequently, the per capita loss for all India is around Rs 27,000 with states like Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Telangana, Delhi, Haryana, Goa, exhibiting loss of more than Rs 40,000 per person in FY21, the report stated.

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SNS

Equity benchmarks snap 3-session losing streak

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 17 AUGUST

bank infused cash into the financial system.

Japan's Nikkei slumped after the country's GDP shrank 7.8 per cent in the April-June period compared with the previous quarter. On an annualised basis, the economy shrank 27.8 per cent ~ its sharpest contraction on record.

"Indian indices overcame an uncertain start and traded in a range, before ending the day with gains. Global cues were also mixed due to the delay in the approval of the US stimulus package and mixed economic data coming in from around the world.

Using private jets was never a tall order for big companies. IPL teams such as Mumbai Indians are major corporate entities by themselves valued at over \$600 million. New York-based financial consultants Duff and Phelps estimated IPL brand value at \$6.7 billion (Rs 47,500 crore) in 2019.

The difference these Covid-19 months has seen is the unprecedented expansion of chartered air travel that included budget airlines. GoAir oper-

ated 51 charter flights carrying 8,951 passengers to India until June 2020.

Good Samaritans such as actors Amitabh Bachchan and Sonu Sood hired chartered flights to fly stranded migrant workers to their home states. Bengal actor and Member of Parliament Deepak Adhikari (Dev) facilitated chartered flights to Kolkata for migrant workers stranded in UAE, Nepal and Russia.

"Clients are choosing to charter [flights] to gain quick access, skip long and crowded check-in, customs, and immigration queues of people with unknown travel histories," the MarketsandMarkets report said. The need to avoid touchpoints - points of contact of human hands on surfaces in public spaces such as

The Chicago-based "MarketsandMarkets" research report this month estimated the private jets business to double from \$18.8 billion in 2020 to \$38 billion by 2030, at a compound annual growth rate of 7.3 per cent.

airports ~ are driving up private air travel amid the pandemic. "With check-in, security, and access to bathrooms and food, there are about 700 touchpoints that travellers can be exposed to when travelling commercially," chief commercial officer of VistaJet, Ian Moore, told "Robb Report", citing McKinsey & Company findings.

Meanwhile, private aviation offers a seamless and effective private terminal process with only 20 touchpoints.

Europe's leading private jet charter company GlobeAir estimates the Covid-19 risk is 30 times lower on a chartered aircraft than a commercial flight. GlobeAir offers services to over 984 airports across Europe with only 15-minute boarding time.

The Malta-based VistaJet's

On standalone basis, the company posted Profit After Tax and Total Income of Rs 1,979 crore and Rs 9,620 crore respectively for Q1FY 2021.

Excluding the impact of this one-time rebate, the company's profit increased by 18 per cent over the corresponding period of FY2019-20 on standalone basis.

SBI's Antyodaya initiative

On the occasion of 74th Independence Day, State Bank of India, New Delhi circle has opened 74 new CSP outlets- customer service centre with the objective of increasing the bank's reach to every last person (Antyodaya) and hence increasing the scope of Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana and banking coverage.

POWERGRID posts PAT of ₹2,048 cr for Q1 FY 2021

On standalone basis, the company posted Profit After Tax and Total Income of Rs 1,979 crore and Rs 9,620 crore respectively for Q1FY 2021.

Excluding the impact of this one-time rebate, the company's profit increased by 18 per cent over the corresponding period of FY2019-20 on standalone basis.

PFC signs agreement to construct modular operation theatres in UP

Government-owned Power Finance Corporation Ltd (PFC), India's leading NBFC, signed a MoA on 10 August, with District Administration of Siddharthnagar in Uttar Pradesh for construction of two Modular Operation Theatre rooms in the District Hospital, Siddharthnagar.

Under the MoA, PFC will provide financial assistance of close to Rs 94 lakh for execution of the Project to the District Administration, Siddharthnagar under its CSR initiative.

Manukonda Prabhakar Das, CGM (CSR&SD),

PFC and Dinesh Kumar Chaudhary, Dy. CMO,

Siddharthnagar signed the agreement on behalf of respective organisations.

People Matters TechHR 2020

People Matters TechHR 2020, organised from 10 to 14 August, brought together the progressive business & HR leaders, HR analysts, and HR technology experts & Worktech startups from around the globe with an aim to find the new ways to rewrite the playbook.

The 5-day virtual conference witnessed leaders and influencers from across the globe deliberating upon innovative ways of progressing in a world that has trans-

SBI launches YONO Krishi; introduces KCC review

Country's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) continues to empower its farmer customers by offering them technology backed agricultural solutions with YONO Krishi.

The recently launched platform that caters to all the requirements of farmers ~ from sowing to harvesting and then selling ~ has been receiving significant traction from the farmers. In the

current unprecedented times due to the COVID-19 pandemic, SBI is set to make lives easier for its farmer customers by introducing the KCC review option on YONO Krishi.

As Asia's one of the largest HR and Worktech conferences, it hosted over 5,000 HR & business leaders from 42 countries, 90 global speakers and 104 content sessions.

The international labour organization has predicted that 50 per cent of people in the world will get affected both in terms of jobs and livelihood due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic combined with the 4th industrial revolution.

SNS

SCOPE WEBINAR



Standing Conference of Public Enterprises (SCOPE) organised a webinar on 'Digital Transformation in COVID-19'. The Webinar was attended by over 2300 participants including senior official from Public Sector Enterprises (PSEs) through SCOPE's various platforms.

Defence minister launches missile test equipment

Defence minister Rajnath Singh launched Konkurs Missile Test Equipment and Konkurs Launcher Test Equipment, on 13 August, which have been indigenously designed and developed by Bharat Dynamics Limited



Earlier, these products, were being imported from Russia.

The two indigenized products were virtually launched by defence minister from New Delhi in the presence of chief of defence staff genera-

al Bipin Rawat, secretary (defence), Ajay Kumar, secretary (defence production) Raj Kumar, senior officials from the ministry of defence and CMD, BDL commodore Siddharth Mishra (Retd), directors, CVO and senior offi-

cials present at Hyderabad. The two products have been launched as a part of "Atmanirbhar Bharat" week being celebrated from 7 to 14 August.

The Konkurs Missile Test Equipment (KMTE) is

designed for checking the serviceability of Konkurs - M Anti-Tank Guided Missiles.

Konkurs Launcher Test Equipment (KITE) is designed and developed for checking the serviceability of Konkurs - M Missile Launchers.

ing. "NFRA has concluded in this AQRR that the appointment of BSR as the statutory auditors of IFIN was ab initio illegal and void," the release said.

It noted that the failure to comply deals with material misstatements of major magnitude and fundamental importance, going concern assumption by the management and the complete absence of the required communication with those charged with governance, among others.

Further, NFRA found that the IT processes/ platform used by BSR have deficiencies that are systemic and structural in nature.

NFRA would also examine whether disciplinary proceedings need to be initiated in connection with the AQRR, the release said.

"We are concerned to note the conclusions by NFRA in the audit quality review as they do not give due consideration to all the facts and circumstances that were transparently shared by us with NFRA during their review," BSR said in the statement.

NFRA finds lapses in statutory audit of IL&FS Fin Services

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 17 AUGUST

The National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA) has found various lapses in the statutory audit of IL&FS Financial Services Limited for 2017-18 that was done by BSR & Associates LLP.

NFRA has issued the audit quality review report (AQRR) of the statutory audit for the year 2017-18 of IL&FS Financial Services Ltd (IFIN).

However, BSR said the audit quality review did not give "due consideration to all the facts and circumstances", adding that it was reviewing the report and would respond in due course.

"The instances of failure to comply with the requirements of the Standards of Auditing (SAs) by BSR are significant," a release issued by the corporate affairs ministry said today. NFRA comes under the ministry. BSR & Associates is an affiliate of KPMG.

As per the ministry's release, BSR did not have adequate justification for issuing the audit report asserting that the audit was conducted in accordance with the Standards of Audit.

the report, it added.

The bank's ADRs are listed on the NYSE.

The law firm said it will investigate "potential securities claims on behalf of shareholders of HDFC Bank following allegations of sharing "materially misleading business information" with investors.

HDFC

Bank said it was not aware of any lawsuit and prima facie it looked "frivolous as we believe we have been transparent in our disclosures".

Rosen

Law Firm is preparing a securities lawsuit on behalf of HDFC Bank shareholders," the global investor right law firm said in a statement on its website.

The law firm quoted media reports about allegations of improper practices and conflict of interest in HDFC Bank Ltd's vehicle financing operations, which involved its former unit head.

If you purchased securities of HDFC Bank please visit the firm's website... to join the securities action," Rosen Law Firm said.

BHEL

India's 74th Independence Day was celebrated with fervour & gaiety by BHEL at all its offices across the country. Anil Kapoor, director (HR), BHEL, unfurled the tricolour and addressed employees at a function at BHEL's township in Noida. BHEL's Corona Warriors from Delhi and NCR-based offices were also honoured on the occasion.

PNB

SS Mallikarjuna Rao, Managing Director & CEO of the PNB Bank unfurled the National Flag in the presence of executive directors, chief general managers, senior executives and other employees. On the occasion, Rao announced the launch of the PNB's new and innovative digital campaign, named as "Digital Apnaven," an initiative to encourage customers to move to digital banking channels for their banking needs.

NDMC

New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) Chairman Dharmanendra unfurled National Flag in the premises of NDMC headquarter, Palika Kendra.

NSIC

Vijayendra, CMD NSIC unfurled the National Flag on India's 74th Independence Day at the Corporate Office, New Delhi.

The world has watched with horror, the violence used by the Belarusian authorities to suppress peaceful protests



SAYING THAT UK DOES NOT RECOGNISE THE RESULTS OF THE "UNFAIR" BELARUS POLLS

Sri Lanka Easter attack probe panel summons former prez Sirisena

COLOMBO, 17 AUGUST

Sri Lanka's former president Maithripala Sirisena has been summoned by a presidential probe panel on August 26 to record his statement on the deadly Easter Sunday attacks, officials said on Monday.

Nine suicide bombers belonging to local Islamist extremist group National Thawheed Jamaat (NTJ) linked to ISIS carried out a series of devastating blasts that tore through three churches and as many luxury hotels on the Easter Sunday last year, killing 258 people, including 11 Indians.

The previous government headed by President Sirisena and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe was blamed for its inability to prevent the attacks despite the prior intelligence made available on the impending attack.

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, who pledged an independent probe in the incident during his election campaign in November last year, continued with the same panel appointed by then president Sirisena after assuming office.

The police unit of the panel appointed by then president Sirisena has asked him to appear before them on August 26, officials said. The panel last week summoned former prime minister Wickremesinghe to appear before it on August 18.

The development comes days after Wickremesinghe suffered a crushing defeat in the parliamentary election.

He and two of his seniors, Sagala Ratnayake and Ruwan Wijewardena - both former ministers who had police and defense responsibility in the government between 2015 and November 2019 - have also been summoned.

PTI

Belarus workers on streets

Protesters raise pressure on President Alexander Lukashenko to step down after 26 years in office

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MINSK, BELARUS



President Alexander Lukashenko addresses employees of the Minsk Wheel Tractor Plant (MZKT), in Minsk, on Monday. AFP

Tens of thousands of factory workers in Belarus took to the streets and crowds of demonstrators besieged the state television headquarters Monday, raising the pressure on authoritarian President Alexander Lukashenko to step down after 26 years in office.

On the ninth straight day of protests against the official results of the Aug. 9 presidential vote, Lukashenko flew by helicopter to a factory in the capital in a bid to rally support but was heckled by workers chanting "Go away!"

Facing the angry crowd, the 65-year-old former state farm director dismissed the calls to step down amid a wave of strikes declared by numerous state-controlled factories.

"I will never cave in to pressure," Lukashenko told the workers, saying those who intend to go on strike could leave if they want. "Some of

you might have got the impression that the government no longer exists, that it has tumbled down. The government will never collapse, you know me well."

"There will be no new election until you kill me," he said, charging that the protests are ruining the economy and warning that the country will collapse if he steps down. He vowed to resist pressure from the demonstrators, who he said have been "poisoned by social networks," but suggested that he's open for dis-

cussions on constitutional reforms in an apparent bid to stem the tide of protests.

As he spoke, over 5,000 striking workers from the Minsk Tractor Plant marched down the streets of the city, demanding that Lukashenko cede his post to Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, the leading opposition candidate.

Lukashenko is a former president. He needs to go," said Sergei Dylevsky, the leader of the protest at the Minsk Tractor Plant, adding that the Kremlin is considering propelling up Lukashenko in

ident, legitimate and elected by the people." Dylevsky voiced concern that Lukashenko's calls with Russian President Vladimir Putin could herald an attempt by the country's giant eastern neighbor to send in troops to prop up Lukashenko.

"We don't want that, and we won't let that happen," he said. Lukashenko spoke twice with Putin over the weekend and reported that the Russian leader said Moscow stands ready to provide support in the face of what he described as foreign aggression. He claimed that NATO nations are beefing up military forces on the border with Belarus, a claim the alliance rejected.

Lithuania also warned about worrying signs that Russia might be planning to use the situation to take over Belarus. Alexander Klaskovsky, an independent Minsk-based political analyst, said that the calls with Putin reflect that the Kremlin is considering propelling up Lukashenko in

exchange for his consent for a closer union between the two nations, which he had resisted in the past. "Russian understands Lukashenko's weakness and is preparing its own scenario, which could envisage a deep integration in exchange for military help," Klaskovsky said. The official results of the Aug. 9 vote gave Lukashenko 80% of the votes and Tsikhanouskaya only 10%, but the opposition claimed the vote was rigged. Tsikhanouskaya has said protocols from precincts around the country showed her winning 60-70% of the vote.

The 37-year-old former teacher left for neighboring Lithuania Tuesday under what her associates described as pressure from law enforcement officials. Her husband, an opposition blogger, whom she replaced on the ballot, has been in jail since May. In a video statement released Monday, Tsikhanouskaya said she was ready to step in as the country's new leader.

CONSTANT REMINDER



A mask-clad man walks past a billboard showing other mask-clad faces and adequate social distance measures, raising awareness about Covid-19 pandemic precautions, in the Beit Hanina neighbourhood in Israeli-annexed East Jerusalem, on Monday. AFP

Singapore announces SGD 8 billion measures to support businesses, workers hit by Covid-19

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
SINGAPORE, 17 AUGUST

A seven-month extension of wage subsidies under a state-run scheme and a new initiative to bolster hiring in "bright spots" were among the SGD 8 billion worth of measures announced by Singapore on Monday to support workers and businesses hit by the coronavirus pandemic.

Announcing the measures, Deputy Prime Minister Heng Swee Keat noted the anxieties of workers about job security and loss of income.

Singapore will have to continue adapting to a rapidly changing situation, Heng said.

With some of the existing support measures ending soon, it is time to advance strategies in three areas, Heng said. This includes continuing support for jobs and creating new ones, providing further support for sectors which are hit the hardest, as well as positioning Singapore to seize growth opportunities in a post-COVID-19 world, he said.

To continue protecting jobs, the Jobs Support Scheme (JSS), which was introduced at the first budget in February, will be extended by seven months to cover wages paid up to March 2021, the minister announced.

The scheme was set to expire after covering salaries in August, with payouts disbursed in October.

Heng said the JSS was launched with a "clear goal" of protecting jobs. The scheme has so far disbursed over SGD

16 billion in payouts, helping more than two million local workers employed by over 150,000 companies.

Preliminary figures from the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) showed the overall unemployment rate in the second quarter rising to 2.9 per cent from 2.4 per cent.

Heng said the JSS cannot be sustained at current levels as it draws heavily on the country's reserves and risks trapping workers in unviable businesses.

Some sectors are also recovering faster than others, so the wage subsidy scheme will be tweaked based on the projected recovery of the different sec-

tors, he said. Under the extended JSS scheme, companies in the worst-hit aerospace, aviation and tourism sectors will receive wage subsidies of 50 per cent for seven more months. For the built environment sector, wage support will be at 50 per cent for two more months before being lowered to 30 per cent from November to March 2021.

This is in line with the phased resumption of construction activities, Heng said.

The arts and entertainment, food services, land transport, marine and offshore and retail sectors will receive 30 per cent in wage subsidies for another seven

months. The large majority of the remaining sectors will be given wage support of 10 per cent for wages paid until March 2021.

For the few sectors that are managing well, such as biomedical sciences, financial services, ICT, public healthcare and long-term care sectors.

The SGD 1 billion programme, which supports the government's efforts to create new jobs, with a special focus on mature workers, will help firms to increase their local worker headcount over the next six months, he said.

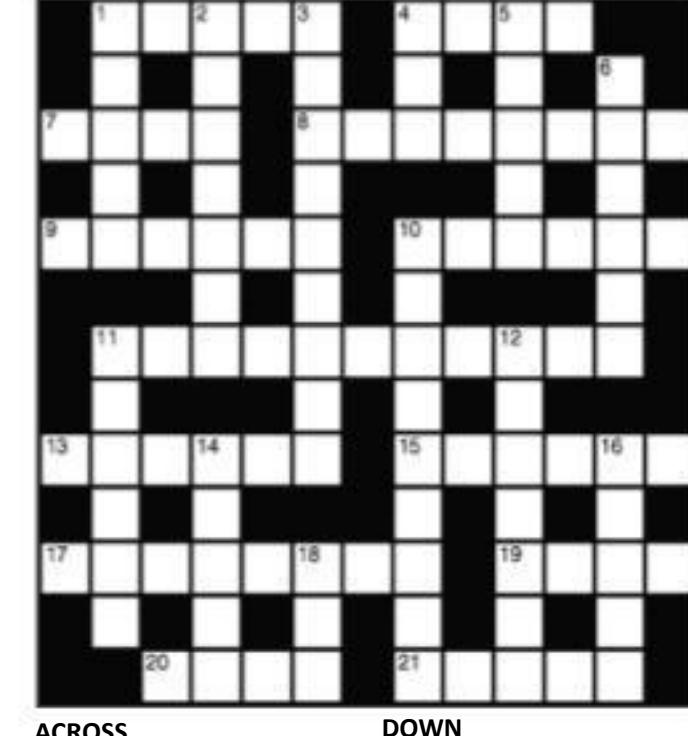
The government will do so by co-paying up to 25 per cent of salaries of all new local hires for one year, subject to a cap. For workers aged 40 and above, the co-payment to firms will be up to 50 percent.

Heng also announced the launch of a Jobs Growth Incentive (JGI) that will "support hiring in bright spots within the economy, such as biomedical sciences, financial services, ICT, public healthcare and long-term care sectors".

More lower-wage workers will also be included under broadened eligibility of the Workfare Special Payment, informed Heng, noting that many of these are essential workers who have kept Singapore going during the Covid-19 crisis.

LEISURE

10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1 Sprain (5)
- 4 Certain (4)
- 7 Metal (4)
- 8 Jotter (8)
- 9 Playground item (6)
- 10 Keep back (6)
- 11 Incessant (11)
- 13 Acquire (6)
- 15 Resist (6)
- 17 Inability to sleep (8)
- 19 Assert (4)
- 20 Final (4)
- 21 Distinctive spirit (5)
- DOWN

 - 1 Relinquish (5)
 - 2 Tooth (7)
 - 3 Female relation (9)
 - 4 Habitual drunkard (3)
 - 5 Automaton (5)
 - 6 Affectionate (6)
 - 10 Reasoned exposition (9)
 - 11 Sophisticated (6)
 - 12 Bring a charge against (7)
 - 14 Scent (5)
 - 16 Glasses (Informal) (5)
 - 18 Louse egg (3)

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

ACROSS	DOWN	13 Tragedy.	14 Cognac,
1 Bore, (Bought)	1 Berate,	15 Regent,	15 Stars,
3 Cup, (Bought)	2 Rangy,	16 Stars,	17 Pâté,
8 Run riot,	3 Tank top,	18 Grace,	19 Avail.
9 Run-in,	4 Panic,	20 Adept,	
10 Thyme,	5 Silent,	21 Charade,	
21 Flat,	6 Studio couch,	22 Say,	
	7 Area,	23 Flat.	

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

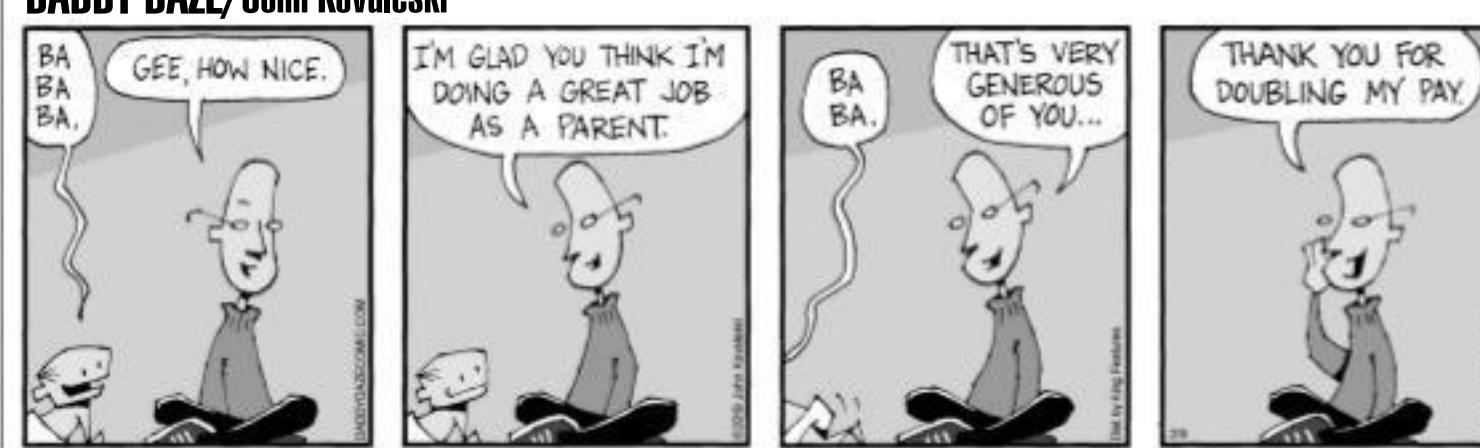
BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker



RED EYE/Bill Yates & Mel Casson



DADDY DAZE/John Kovaleski



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HOSPITALS

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Toll Free Nos. 1800125159

23864470

U.P. Railways 23868709

ROADWAYS INQUIRY

AI PORT ROADWAYS 23868836, 23865181

INDIGO AIRLINES 18001801407

GENERAL AIRPORTS 25656421/25656431 Reservation 41528181

AIR FRANCE 25652294/Airport 41528181

KUWAIT AIRWAYS 25652294/Airport 41528181

QATAR AIRWAYS 25652294/Air



What we all fit into is knowing that right now we don't have leadership in our country, and it's hurting all of us.

GEORGIA DEMOCRATIC CHAIRWOMAN NIKEMA WILLIAMS
URGING ALL DEMOCRATS TO UNITE FOR THE US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

WEATHER

CITY	MAX (°C)	MIN (°C)
SINGAPORE	31	26 H
HONG KONG	29	24 H
TOKYO	33	27 R
LONDON	22	15 R
DUBAI	38	32 CL
SAN FRANCISCO	23	16 H
NEW YORK	27	20 R
MOSCOW	23	11 S

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

THUMBNAILS



Students with placards take part in a protest march in Codsall near Wolverhampton, central England, on Monday, to demonstrate against the downgrading of A-level results.

Postmaster general Louis DeJoy, has sparked nationwide outcry over delays, new prices & cutbacks as Americans will be trying to vote by mail

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON, 17 AUGUST

Speaker Nancy Pelosi said Sunday she is calling the House back into session over the crisis at the U.S. Postal Service, setting up a political showdown amid growing concerns that the Trump White House is trying to undermine the agency ahead of the election.

Pelosi is cutting short lawmakers' summer recess with a vote expected the Saturday after the Democratic National Convention on legislation that would prohibit changes at the agency as tensions mount.

President Donald Trump's new postmaster general, Louis DeJoy, has sparked nationwide outcry over delays, new prices and cutbacks just as millions of Americans will be trying to vote by mail to avoid polling



places during the coronavirus outbreak.

In a time of pandemic, the Postal Service is Election Central," Pelosi wrote Sunday in a letter to colleagues, who had been expected to be out of session until September. Lives, livelihoods and the life

of our American Democracy are under threat from the president.

The decision to recall the House, made after a weekend of high-level leadership discussions, carries a political punch. Voting in the House will highlight the issue after the

weeklong convention nominating Joe Biden as the party's presidential pick and pressure the Republican-held Senate to respond.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell sent senators home for a summer recess. Earlier Sunday, Democratic lawmakers demanded that leaders of the Postal Service testify at an emergency oversight hearing Aug. 24 on mail delays.

The House Oversight and Reform Committee said it wants to hear from DeJoy and from the chair of the Postal Service board of governors, Robert Mike Duncan.

With heightened scrutiny of its operations, the Postal Service is now requesting a temporary pre-election rate increase, from mid-October through Christmas, although not for first-class letters. The agency did not immediately respond to requests for comment about whether the two men would appear before the House committee.

The legislation being prepared for the vote, the Delivering for America Act, would prohibit the Postal Service from implementing any changes to operations or level of service it had in place on 1 January.

DeJoy, a major Republican donor and ally of the president who took control of the agency in June, has pledged to modernize the money-losing agency to make it more efficient, and has eliminated most overtime for postal workers, imposed restrictions on transportation and reduced of the quantity and use of mail-processing equipment.

Trump said last week that he was blocking a \$25 billion emergency injection sought by the Postal Service, as well as a Democratic proposal to provide \$3.6 billion in additional election money to the states. The Republican pres-

ident worries that mail-in voting could cost him reelection.

The money for the post office is intended to help with processing an expected surge of mail-in ballots. Both funding requests have been tied up in congressional negotiations over a new coronavirus relief package. On Saturday, Trump tried to massage his message, saying he supports increasing money for the Postal Service. He said he was refusing to capitulate to Democrats on other parts of the relief package, including funding for states weighed down by debt accumulated before the pandemic.

But the president's critics were not appeased, contending that Trump has made the calculation that a lower voter turnout would improve his chances of winning a second term.

NOVEL PROTEST



Members of the Kayapo tribe block the BR163 highway during a protest outside Novo Progresso in Para state, Brazil on Monday. The protesters blocked a transamazonian highway to protest against the lack of governmental support during the pandemic and illegal deforestation.

Trump helps unite Democrats to rally behind Joe Biden, Kamala Harris

ASSOCIATED PRESS
ATLANTA (US), 17 AUGUST

For the second time in four years, the Democratic presidential primary pitted the expanding progressive movement against an eventually victorious establishment.

But as the party gathers virtually this week to nominate Joe Biden for the presidency, the possibility of President Donald Trump's reelection has become Democrats' unifying and energising force.

"Nobody fits neatly and tightly into any one bucket," said Georgia Democratic Chairwoman Nikema Williams.

"What we all fit into is knowing that right now we don't have leadership in our

country, and it's hurting all of us."

That's an important shift from 2016, when Hillary Clinton struggled to build a coalition between her supporters and those who backed Sen. Bernie Sanders, who again finished as runner-up this year.

It reflects both the work Biden has done to court the left and the urgency among Democrats to defeat Trump, which has only intensified amid the pandemic, economic turmoil and a national reckoning on racism.

Still, the party's ideological splits haven't vanished. There are disagreements over how to achieve universal health care, make higher education affordable, overhaul law enforcement practices and

running for the nomination.

Taylor nodded at Biden's pick of Kamala Harris as his running mate, the first Black woman on a major party's ticket. But she cast the California senator, who is also of Asian descent, as an establishment politician alongside Biden, a former vice president first elected to the Senate in 1972.

If Biden and Harris want to energize progressives to donate and volunteer, Taylor said, "They need to elevate leaders like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Julian Castro, and policies like canceling student debt and Medicare for All. Progressive energy matters. We're fighting Trump as hard as we can right now just don't take that for granted."

Australia records highest daily Covid-19 deaths

MELBOURNE, 17 AUGUST

Australia on Monday recorded its highest count in daily COVID-19 deaths with 25 fatalities, taking the country-wide coronavirus death toll to 421.

Apart from the 25 deaths, 282 new Covid-19 cases were confirmed in the last 24 hours. Now, the country's total number of Covid-19 cases stands at 23,576, including 14,080 cases of recovery.

In his daily coronavirus update, Victoria Premier Daniel Andrews said daily virus spike of under 300 cases was welcome but vigilance among the people remained important. "We can't allow any sense of complacency to creep in here. This is an ultramarathon. While there is a trend that is positive, today is a very sad day for 25 families," he said. Andrews announced that the number of active cases in aged care homes had surpassed 2,000 cases. The premier also listed a few positive developments. "I'm pleased to say, there's a falling number of people whom we can't make contact with for whatever reason (who are suspected to be linked with virus-infected people), and that's why the door-knocking is going on -- literally thousands and thousands of doors are being knocked on," the premier said, referring to the contact-tracing procedure.

"We are strong, there is good cause for people to be hopeful about the future," Andrews said. Victoria is under a four-week state of disaster' routine since August 2. The 'state of emergency' period will be extended till September 13, Andrews said, adding that the extension will help the authorities in enforcing restrictions.

In New South Wales, seven new Covid-19 cases were reported in the last 24 hours, of them six were locally-acquired cases and one was an overseas traveller who is now in hotel-quarantine. The state saw one death and its lowest daily coronavirus cases in a month with five Covid-19 detections on Sunday.

Sharp rise in Coronavirus cases in Lebanon after deadly port blast

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BEIRUT, 17 AUGUST

Lebanon is facing a surge in coronavirus cases after a devastating blast at the Beirut port earlier this month killed scores and wounded thousands, prompting medical officials to urge Monday for a two-week lockdown to try to contain the pandemic.

Virus numbers were expected to rise following the explosion of nearly 3,000 tons of ammonium nitrate stored at the port. Around 180 people were killed, more than 6,000 wounded and a quarter of a million left with homes unfit to live in.

The blast overwhelmed the city's hospitals and also badly damaged two that had a key role in handling virus cases. Ahead of the surge, medical officials had warned of the dangers of crowding at hospitals in the aftermath of the explosion, at funerals or as people

searched through the rubble. Protests and demonstrations also broke out after the blast as Lebanese vented their anger at the ruling class and decades-long mismanagement.

On Sunday, Lebanon registered 439 new virus cases and six fatalities. The new infections bring to 8,881 the total number of cases in the small country of just over 5 million, where

Covid-19 has killed some 103 people.

Separately, the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, said four Palestinians died of the virus over the weekend, doubling to eight the number of dead so far in Lebanon.

It is a matter of life and death,

Hassan said, adding that soon private and public hospitals might not be able to take more patients. Lebanon's health sector has been challenged by the pandemic that hit amid an unprecedented economic and financial crisis. The explosion in Beirut's port only increased the pressure on the Lebanese capital's hospitals, knocking out at least three of them.

Dr Firas Abiad, director general of Rafik Hariri University Hospital which is leading the fight against coronavirus, described the situation as extremely worrisome, warning that without a lockdown, the numbers will continue to

rise overwhelming the hospital capacity." Hassan urged every expatriate or foreigner returning to Lebanon not to leave their hotels until they are tested and cleared. People traveling to Lebanon will be required to be tested both before and upon arrival.

He also called for field hospitals and said some public hospitals will exclusively handle virus patients.

Petra Khoury, medical adviser to outgoing Prime Minister Hassan Diab, tweeted that Covid-19 positive rate has increased from 2.1% to 5.6% in just four weeks.

The virus doesn't differentiate between us. A rate 5%

is real threat to all our nation, she warned.

Meanwhile, Iran, which has the region's largest and deadliest outbreak of the coronavirus, reported 165 more deaths from Covid-19, bringing the overall death toll to 19,804.

New restrictions on leisure activities accompanied the final weeks of summer break in Europe.

With one goal in mind, the Italian government closed discos, required masks from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. anywhere people might gather and began testing all arriving travelers from Spain, Greece, Malta and Croatia.

Our priority must be the reopening of schools in September in full safety, Italian Health Minister Roberto Speranza said. Italy's schools have

Returning vacationers face new constraints as virus spikes

ASSOCIATED PRESS

PARIS, 17 AUGUST

Countries that had seen a summer respite from coronavirus outbreaks tracked swiftly rising numbers of new confirmed cases Monday, prompting fears among government leaders and health officials that months of hard-won progress would be lost in a matter of days as vacationers return home.

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tember in full safety, Italian Health Minister Roberto Speranza said. Italy's schools have

been closed nationwide since early March. France's two largest cities, Paris and Marseille, widened the areas where

masks are required, and the French government sent riot police to the Marseille region to enforce the requirement.

The country's labor minister is planning negotiations for Tuesday on making masks mandatory in all workplaces and other employee safety measures.

French government studies indicated that at least a quarter of new virus clusters that emerged from May 9 to Aug. 11 were linked

to workplaces. We need a culture of masks, a culture of protective measures. We failed to deliver this clear message in the first wave, Dr. Giles Pialoux, the head of infectious diseases at Tenon Hospital in Paris, told France Inter radio on Monday.

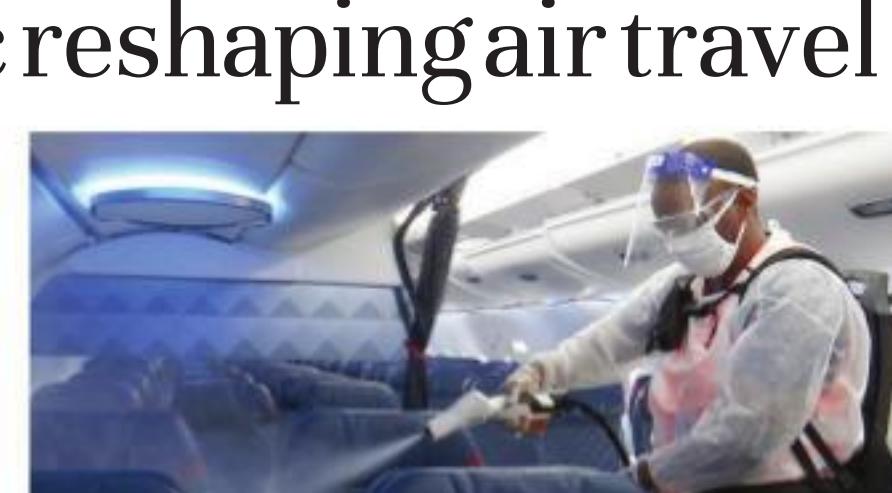
We need strong and coherent messages. I think the strategy of fear does not work.

In Greece, health officials attributed many new infections to wedding receptions and people ignoring social distancing and other public health protective measures while on vacation.

Pandemic reshaping air travel as carriers struggle

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON, 17 AUGUST



for a rebound.

We are all hoping that by the fall the virus might run its course, said Southwest Airlines CEO Gary Kelly. Obviously, that has proven to be dead wrong. When Consumer Reports surveyed more than 1,000 people in June about their comfort with various activities during the pandemic, 70 percent said flying was very or somewhat unsafe. They rated going to a hospital emergency room or standing in line to vote as safer.

In a survey commissioned by an airline trade group, the biggest concern of travelers was the possibility of sitting next to an infected person.

John Kontak, a schoolteacher from Phoenix, said that was his fear as soon as he

stepped onto a crowded American Airlines flight this summer to visit his parents in Ohio.

I don't know anything about this person who is sitting a foot away from me, Kontak said. They took the bottom line or the dollar over the safety of passengers. Next time, I'd rather drive back to Ohio than fly -- it's safer because I can control it.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says sitting within 6 feet (2 meters) of other passengers, often for hours, may increase the risk of getting COVID-19. But CDC also notes that most viruses and other germs don't spread easily on flights because air circulates on planes.

Standard & Poor's said this

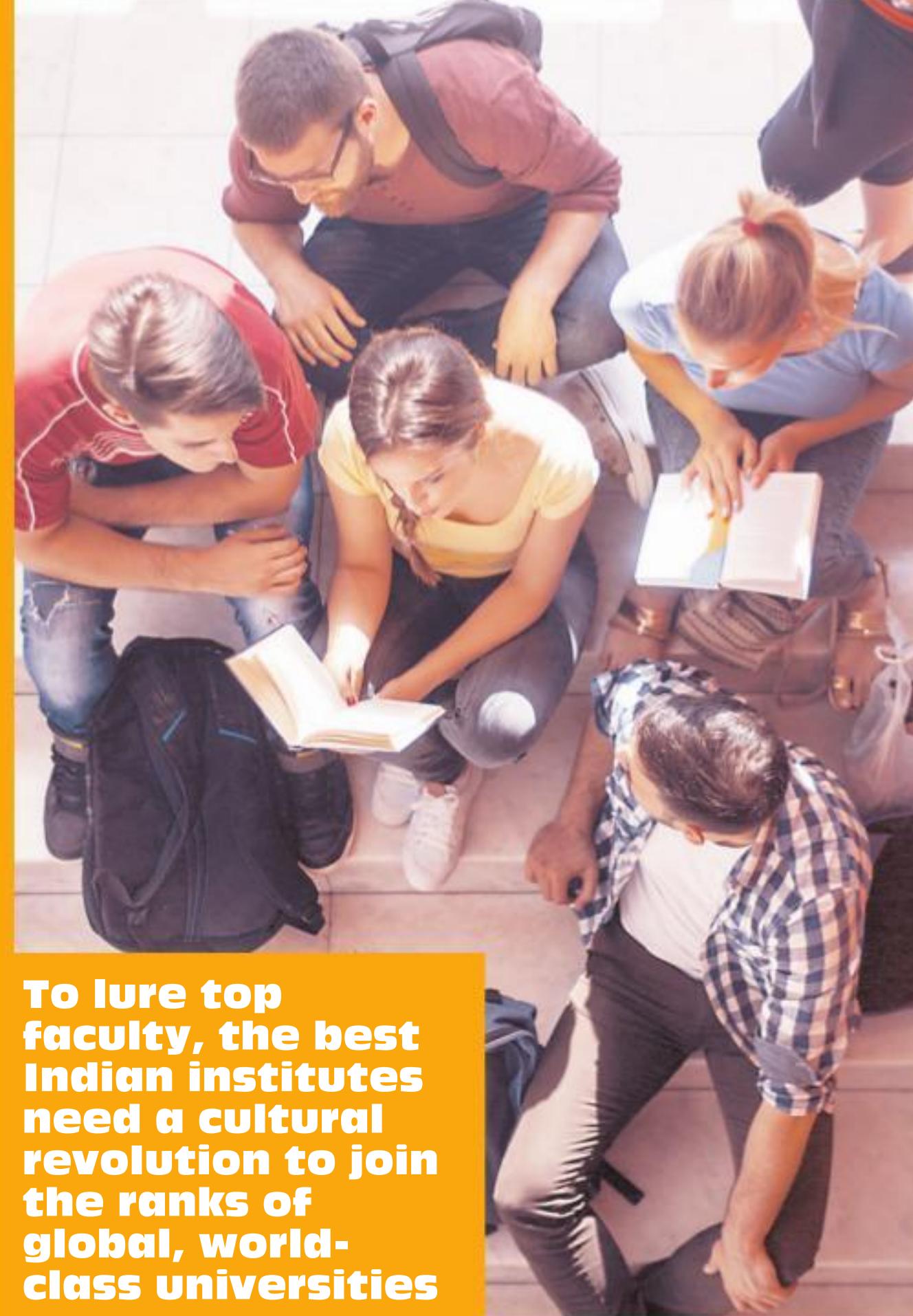
week that the industry's prospects have gone from bad to worse, with global air traffic dropping by up to 70 percent this year. In May, S&P said a 55 per cent drop was a worst-case scenario.

It's going to be a slower and more uneven recovery than one might have expected, S&P analyst Philip Baggaley said. An airline trade group, the International Air Transport Association, predicts carriers will lose USD 84 billion this year, making it the worst year in the industry's history. The group says traffic won't fully recover until 2024.

Air traffic at Europe's more than 500 airports has tumbled, down 94 per cent in June compared with the same month last year. There were about 4 million passengers, compared with 217 million a year earlier.

Travel ticked up when

Need for a turnaround strategy



To lure top faculty, the best Indian institutes need a cultural revolution to join the ranks of global, world-class universities



AMIT SINGH

According to a research conducted for universities, once again none of the so-called world-class IITs and IIMs features in the top tier of the list. The rankings based on the institutions' global partnerships, top academics' perceptions, and high-impact research published in leading journals paint a very sorry picture for Indian universities on the global stage.

While the government has started initiatives like Study in India to attract more international students, the gap between an Indian university and a foreign university remains quite vast. We've delved into some of the reasons why Indian universities are unable to compete with their foreign counterparts.

Focus of quantity and not quality

One might be taken aback by the fact that not a single Indian university features in the World's Top 100 Universities list. Despite churning out highly intellectual people, Indian universities still fall short of the international standards set by foreign universities. But this is changing. Albeit the pace of change is still not good enough to be in the rankings. One of the chief reasons for this is that the kind of government funding given to Indian universities is not at the same level as that to universities across the world. Instead of bolstering the quality of successful institutes to make them a global force to be reckoned with, the government has opened fringe universities like IIM Amritsar, IIM Bodh Gaya, IIM Vizag, and many more. The idea behind this move is to give students from all over the country a chance at quality education. This is no doubt a noble cause, but if Indian universities want to vie with big guns like Stanford University or the University of Oxford, a serious turnaround strategy must be implemented.

Inability to attract global faculty

To compete with international universities, Indian ones need to have a faculty that comprises of a good number of international professors. Currently, there are just 40 foreign teachers at all of the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs). That's only a mere 1 per cent of the total faculty of 5,400, despite the government's goal to attract 20 per cent, international faculty. To lure top faculty, the best Indian institutes need a "cultural revolution" to join the ranks of global, world-class universities. Also, adequate salaries need to be provided. As of today, the

average salary in the IITs is around US\$27,500, whereas, in countries like China, salaries paid to top-level faculty are to the tune of US\$100,000 or more, along with additional research funding.

Lack of study options

The Indian education system is deeply rooted in popular STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) courses. In today's day and age, students are looking to broaden their horizons by pursuing careers that revolve around unconventional and contemporary fields like entertainment, sports and psychology. Now, although Indian universities have started such courses, they lack the expertise and accreditation to shape talented students for a better career path. On the other hand, universities in the US, UK, and Canada have changed with time and pivoted to offering a rich variety of courses available to international students.

Incredibly high admission criteria

Granted, this has no explicit connection to quality of education but is a point that needs to be addressed, especially when it comes to attracting international students to build global repute. IITs and IIMs themselves admit that despite fierce competition among India's best and brightest to get admission at the institutes, enrolment of foreign students matter. But the entry criteria is so high that even the few eligible international students doesn't always stand a chance to be accepted at MIT, Stanford, Caltech, etc.

Emigration

Many Indian students look to emigrate in order to pursue a degree abroad. Being that countries abroad like Canada and the US offer attractive job prospects and their flexible immigration policies make it possible for students to seek employment on completion of studies. The US National Science Foundation's Survey reveals that about 80 per cent of students from India and other Asian countries choose to remain in America after completing their graduate and doctoral studies. This leads to a severe deficit in the number of students attending universities in India. Factors such as cost of living, employment and quality of life can be sole determinants for students looking to study abroad. A recent survey concluded that India ranks second when it comes to students who leave the country to study overseas.

The writer is founder and CEO, UniAcco



ENHANCING LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Teaching practices need to evolve with changing times and technology will play an essential role in democratising education and making it accessible to all

AKHIL SHAHANI

Online education has become the need of the hour. The ongoing Covid-19 crisis has led to the shutting down of schools, colleges and coaching centres all over the country, forcing teachers and students alike, to adapt newer technologies to facilitate education and learning. Many of the schools and colleges have adapted to this change, and started online classes and lectures for their students. However, there are yet a large number of students who have been marooned in the wake of this pandemic.

The first and foremost problem in making online education accessible to all is Internet connectivity. Virtual classrooms and digital lectures can only be possible if a student has an uninterrupted, high speed active Internet connection and a device like a smartphone, laptop or computer where they can access the same. While most urban students usually have access to the aforementioned, it is often India's rural and poor that are left out of this equation. Only 600 mil-

lion out of India's 1.2 billion population have Internet connectivity, show estimates. This means that a majority of the students will be left behind in terms of their studies during this lockdown period. They will miss out on valuable learning time and as the school year progresses, fall back when compared to their connected peers. Even those who do have a connection may not have the necessary 4G speeds required to stream live sessions online.

The long list of problems can be resolved by implicating certain solutions. For those students who have slow or basic internet connections, teachers can record lectures and upload the same. This would make it easier for students to access lectures by streaming them when they can, or even downloading the same for viewing at a later time. Students who do not have access to smartphones or laptops could be taught via audio lectures through conference calls over mobile phones or landlines at a pre-decided time. Schools could also provide students with a helpline number that they can call to clear doubts or

even stay updated regarding the current situation.

However these are stop-gap measures that can only solve the problem temporarily. Recorded lectures and phone calls cannot match a live classroom experience and therefore, efforts need to be made to supply the resources necessary for good quality online education to those in need. The government can provide free smartphones and tablets along with free or economical data plans to the under-resourced students. It can also set up cyber cafes or hubs, which are equipped with computers which can be easily accessed by students. While this may not be fully possible during the lockdown, steps like these are an investment for the future. Tie-ups with network providers to set-up towers in certain areas could also promise better connectivity.

Language can also be a major barrier in democratising education. Most of the quality learning material online is available in English, making it difficult for those who do not comprehend the language to study. Efforts need to be made to make most of the

material available in vernacular languages if it has to fully penetrate India's hinterlands. Edtech companies can study audience preferences and curate content in those languages so as to fully tap their potential markets. Governments can also tie-up with these platforms so as to provide these courses free of cost to students that may not be able afford the same. It could even offer tax breaks for companies and individuals to donate devices and data. The government should also add to the free educational content available on their portal Swayam, and publicise it well so as to make more people aware of these facilities.

An online classroom does not function in the same way as a physical classroom, and therefore educators need to bring about a shift in teaching pedagogies. Students have a lower attention span when studying online and if a teacher were to speak for a long period of time like in a regular classroom, they may lose interest

and not fully understand the information being imparted. Teachers should initiate interactive discussions and exercises to ensure that students are engaged in the learning process. The use of technologies like AI, ML, AR and VR, gamification of study material, or engaging content through audio and visual cues need to be adapted to enhance the learning experience.

The current scenario is filled with uncertainties, but it is certain that we may not go back to the world as we know it. Covid-19 has pushed online learning to the forefront, and even if we were to return to the brick-and-mortar classrooms, we cannot eradicate the use of technology from the same. Teaching practices will have to evolve with changing times and technology will play an essential role in democratising education and making it accessible to all.

The writer is managing director, Shahani Group

PLUS POINTS

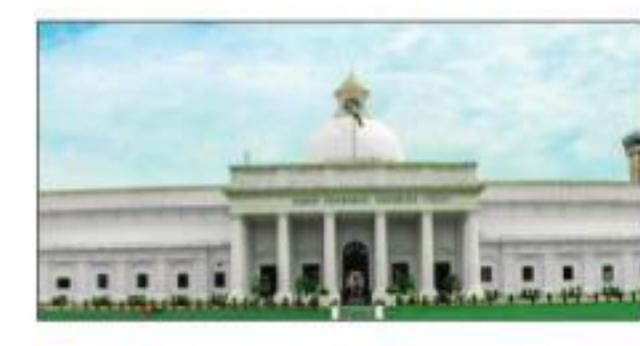
Induction ceremony



Fore School of Management, New Delhi, conducted its induction ceremony online to welcome the incoming batch of management students recently. The event was attended by students, faculties, staff and alumni. Over 400 students, from different batches attended it. The ceremony began with a reassuring address by Dr Sanghamitra Budhaphriya, dean (academics), Fore School, who comforted the students and commended their decision to start the management programme amidst challenging conditions.

The induction oath was conducted by Jitendra K Das, director, followed by a brief address by BBL Madhukar, chairman. Das briefed the students about the newly introduced seminar course, an addition to the existing curriculum.

Strengthening prowess



Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Roorkee has partnered with Coursera to launch new online programmes and certifications for global audience recently. IIT Roorkee plans to launch high demand programmes like advanced certification in artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) and certification in data science.

The advanced certification in AI and ML programme will enable learners to learn AI/ML skills. It is a six-month programme and is a unique combination of expert lectures, hands-on labs, tutorials, team projects, and workshops ensuring fast-track learning. Certification in data science programme is designed to equip professionals with competencies in the core focus areas of data science, machine learning, critical thinking, data collection, data visualisation, and data management. IIT Roorkee will launch both the programmes on Coursera in early 2021.

Empowering students

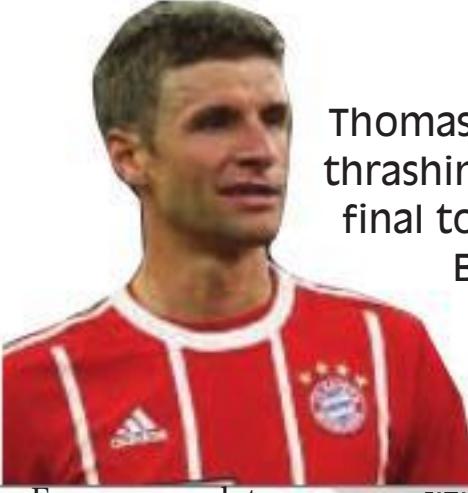


Xebia Academy Global, the education business unit of Xebia signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology (TIET), Patiala recently to introduce specialisation for its computer science engineering students in the areas of software development and automation, cloud engineering and DevOps for the academic session 2020-21. Under this collaboration, Xebia will support TIET as the industry partner and help in curriculum design and development, creating study modules containing high-quality industry-specific content, and strengthening the faculty through building a team of competent educators with rigorous teach the educator programme. Apart from imparting knowledge, Xebia will facilitate the placement of graduating students.

Annual conference

SAI International School hosted eSAI Model United Nations 2020 (eSAIMUN 2020) – the annual Model United Nations (MUN) conference adopting the digital route recently. Around 750 delegates, 20 committees and 10 countries from Australia, Japan, UAE, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Vietnam, USA, Uganda and India along with 34 schools participated in it. The inaugural session was attended by Ambassador Kelly Craft, permanent representative, US Mission to the United Nations at New York, Dr Bijaya Kumar Sahoo, founder and mentor, SAI International Education Group & Advisor and working president of Odisha Adarsha Vidyalaya Sangathan, Government of Odisha and many others.

It was an intellectually stimulating event and brought about a prolific change in the learning horizon of the participants. Apart from enriching debates and interesting agendas, a lot of global interaction took place during the two-day conference. Students were divided into two groups for easy monitoring, and they discussed and deliberated on current global issues.



For more updates

www.thestatesman.com

GLORY BOY

Thomas Mueller (in photo) has said Bayern Munich's 8-2 thrashing of Barcelona in the Champions League quarter-final topped the 7-1 hammering Germany had handed Brazil at the 2014 World Cup. "When Germany played against Brazil we were not as in control as we were against Barca," insists Mueller.

THUMBNAILS

Positive test: Kei Nishikori, the 2014 US Open runner-up, tested positive for Covid-19 on Sunday and said he would pull out of a tune-up tournament starting next week. He did not say what his plans were for the Grand Slam tournament that would begin on 31 August.

Snooker title: Ronnie O'Sullivan clinched his sixth snooker world title in dominant style to end his seven-year drought at the Crucible, beating Kyren Wilson 18-8. O'Sullivan joins Steve Davis and Ray Reardon on six world championships in the modern era.

Gunners' wish: Arsenal managing director Vinai Venkatesham, supervising the club's transfer strategy, has revealed his desire for the club to be competing to win the Premier League and the Champions League, admitting he is "impatient" to get them back on top.

Rafa rock-bottom: Rafael Benitez hit rock-bottom in the Chinese Super League on Sunday after Guangzhou R&F extended Dalian Pro's wretched winless start to the season. Israeli international striker Eran Zahavi scored off a penalty to give R&F a 1-0 victory.

Dhoni's jersey: Players and fans on Sunday urged India's cricket board to retire MS Dhoni's No 7 jersey in a tribute to the two-time World Cup winning captain. Dhoni, 39, called time on his 16-year-old international career on Saturday with a cryptic social media message.

Formula One: Lewis Hamilton claimed his 88th Formula One career victory and, with it, an outright record 156th podium finish on Sunday when he drove his Mercedes to a masterful victory in the Spanish Grand Prix. It was the world championship leader's fifth win in Spain.

Boxer Sarita Devi tests COVID-19 positive: Indian boxer Sarita Devi and her husband Thoiba Singh have tested positive for coronavirus. In an interview with IANS, Sarita's husband Thoiba said, "Sarita and me were tested Covid positive today. We will go to the COVID centre now, since home quarantine is not allowed here. Till this very moment there are no COVID symptoms to us."

Man City to honour Silva: Manchester City will recognise David Silva's 10-year career at the club by building a statue in honor of the Spanish playmaker at the Etihad Stadium. Silva played his last game for the English team in the 3-1 loss to Lyon in the Champions League quarterfinals on Saturday.

Caribbean Premier League: The wait is over! Hero MotoCorp, is set to bring the exciting cricketing action back with Hero Caribbean Premier League (Hero CPL), popularly known as the 'Biggest Party in Sport', starting from 18 August to 10 September 2020. The Hero CPL will bring the best T20 cricketers in action from the Caribbean and from around the world. This includes the likes of Andre Russell, Kieron Pollard, Rashid Khan, Ross Taylor and Dwayne Bravo.

Points for Alex Marquez in Austria: A trying day at the Red Bull Ring with a red-flag interrupted race, but Alex Marquez salvages points to continue his top 15 run. Stefan Bradl's participation in next week's Styria GP is confirmed as Marc Marquez continues his recovery. Weather forecasts were once again proven wrong as glorious sunshine beat down on the Red Bull Ring for the fourth MotoGP race of the year. Both Repsol Honda Team RC213Vs shot off the line, Alex Marquez and Stefan Bradl immediately gaining positions and joining the group battling for the top ten.

Rain-hit Eng vs Pak Test drawn

AGENCIES
SOUTHAMPTON, 17 AUGUST

Zak Crawley struck a half-century as England and Pakistan played out a tame draw in their rain-hit second test at the Rose Bowl on Monday.

Only 134.3 overs were possible in the entire match, which included a 38 over spell late on the fifth afternoon as the sun finally came out, with England finishing on 110 for four before the game was called off with no prospect of a result.

Crawley scored 53, his third test half-century, before he was out leg before wicket to Mohammad Abbas (2-28) having put on 91 with Dom Sibley (32) for the second wicket, both gaining valuable time at the crease ahead of the third and final test that starts at the same venue on Friday.

Opener Rory Burns (0) and Ollie Pope (9) were the other

two batsmen dismissed. Pakistan had won the toss and elected to bat, posting 236 in their first innings.

England won the first test in Manchester by three wickets, with this draw ending their run of three successive test wins after beating the West Indies 2-1 in their series played last month.

Resuming at 223/9 on Day 4, Mohammad Rizwan topped for the tourists with a fighting 72 as Stuart Broad and James Anderson returned figures of 4/56 and 3/60, respectively, to bowl out Pakistan for 236. England lost Rory Burns (0) in the first over itself as Shaeen Shah Afridi had the left hander caught at second slip by Asad Shafiq. Following a fifth inspection of the pitch and outfield by umpires, it was decided that play could begin at 3:20 p.m. at the Rose Bowl.

Lots of sawdust has been placed in the bowlers' run-up areas, with parts of the outfield clearly sodden. Only 5



resumed its first innings on 7-1 in reply to Pakistan's 236 all out. Only 96.2 overs have been possible so far, with rain washing out all of the third day and most of the fourth day. Time was lost during the first two days because of wet weather and bad light.

Lots of sawdust has been placed in the bowlers' run-up areas, with parts of the outfield clearly sodden. Only 5

'England owe Pakistan a reciprocal tour'

Wasim Akram has said that England owe Pakistan a reciprocal tour after Azhar Ali's men travelled for three-Test series to the United Kingdom amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Pakistan are currently involved in the Test series in England following which the two teams will contest in three T20Is as well.

"You boys owe Pakistan cricket, and the country, a lot, with the boys coming over here. They've been here almost two and half months in the bio-secure environment," Akram told Sky Sports Cricket. "So if everything goes well, England should tour Pakistan. "I promise you they'll get looked after on and off the field there and every game will be a packed house," he added.

Dhoni has another option in shooting

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 17 AUGUST

Enquiring about importing a rifle, he once sent a mail at around 2am, got it delivered at his Ranchi home, went to the range and did what he does in anything he tries his hand at.

Mahendra Singh Dhoni (in photo) hit the bull's eye, fuelling an interest that would see him visit innumerable shooting ranges in the country over the next few years and display his skills in the sport.

The Walther rifle imported by Dhoni, who retired from international cricket on Saturday, is the same model which another champion sportsperson, Abhinav Bindra, had used to win a historic individual gold medal at the Olympics.

This was 10 years ago, when Indian shooters were starting to dominate on the world stage and Dhoni, who is now also a life member of National Rifle Association of

India (NRAI), was bracing up for what would culminate into his second World Cup title triumph.

The model that he owns is LG300XT Walther Carbonec.

"I once got a mail late at night around 2 AM. As a requirement to import rifles when I asked for the full name and address, he replied within a few minutes with his full name along with his Ranchi address, that's when I realised it was him," former India shooter Shimon Sharif,

"After he imported his Walther rifle he was in touch with me and exchanged several emails and even text messages. I had offered to help him to take up the sport but he was too busy then with all his cricketing commitments," Sharif said.

Narsingh has already been named for the national camp, scheduled to begin from September 1 in Sonepat - the same place where, before Rio Olympics, he alleged that his dope story was planned. Later, the claims were found false and he was handed a four-year ban for flunking the dope test.

Sushil vs Narsingh fight very much on the cards, says WFI

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 17 AUGUST

The COVID-19 pandemic has turned out to be a 'blessing in disguise' for Narsingh Yadav as the wrestler has got another chance to represent India in the Olympics.

Had the Olympics taken place this year, the 31-year-old would have had to wait for another four years to compete. However, with the pandemic forcing the Tokyo Games to postpone for a year and his dope ban also ending in July, the Mumbai grapper is all set to live the dream yet again.

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The wrestler will be seen in action again and his ring rival and two-time Olympic medalist Sushil Kumar will have to train real hard as the two may lock horns again for the 74kg category in Olympic qualifiers trials. Speaking to IANS, Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) assistant secretary Vinod Tomar said Narsingh is allowed to resume training after getting clearance from the committee. "He requested the committee and promised to be more careful in the future, so we allowed him to join the camp. His ban also finished in July, so he has all the rights to train for the Olympics as well," Tomar said.

Asked if there are chances of Sushil facing Narsingh again, Tomar said, "We (India) are yet to qualify in 74kg weight category. So there will be trials in this category before Olympic qualifiers. Sushil, Narsingh and others will have to go through that."

Sevilla knock out wasteful Mancunians

Sevilla 2
Manchester United 1
MARK CRITCHLEY
COLOGNE, 17 AUGUST

This Europa League trip to Cologne was supposed to be a low-stakes affair for Manchester United, with the prize of Champions League qualification secured weeks ago, but the sight of their heads hung low at the final whistle and their tired bodies dragging themselves off the pitch, you could tell this semi-final defeat to Sevilla will devastate them.

A captivating contest at the RheinEnergieStadion could easily have ended with Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's side in Friday's showpiece at this same venue, against either Internazionale or Shakhtar Donetsk, yet Luuk de Jong's (in photo) tap-in with 12 minutes remaining sent this competition's most successful club to

yet another final. United had opportunities. Plenty, in fact. Many came at the frantic start of the second half but, like in last week's quarter-final against Copenhagen, an inspired goalkeeping display denied them. The curiously-named Yassine Bono ensured that Solskjaer's side would not find what they were looking for. Yet they were also the architects of their own downfall.

There will be questions about the defence, badly carved open for De Jong's goal as well as Suso's equaliser before it.

Solskjaer's decision to use his first substitutes in the 87th minute is also deserving of scrutiny. And once again, his players only could find the net from the penalty spot. Bruno Fernandes' ninth-minute penalty appeared to give United a valuable foothold but it came too soon to last.

This is still a season of

progress, albeit one with concerns that should be addressed in the few weeks before the September restart. Solskjaer has turned what could have been a calamitous campaign into something worth remembering - both by finishing in the Premier League's top four and the run through this tournament - but its final chapter is

painful one. Much was made of Sevilla's pedigree as five-time winners but Ever Banega was the only survivor of their most recent triumph in 2016 in the starting line-up. Their 19-game unbeaten run dating back to February - the longest streak of its kind in the club's 130-year history - was far more relevant and Solskjaer was

right to describe them in his pre-match interviews as United's toughest opponents since lockdown.

That made the early goal all the more important. Yet again, it was Bruno Fernandes from the penalty spot - his eighth from eight since arriving in January and United's 22nd spot-kick of the season - and the offending Sevilla centre-half could have little complaint. It is not often that you see a penalty given after the player being fouled has successfully got a shot away but Diego Carlos' late swipe at Marcus Rashford's left shin was as clear as they come. After remaining grounded for the decisive kick against Copenhagen last Monday, Fernandes went back to his trademark hop run - leaping a little higher than usual - and emphatically found the top left-hand corner. THE INDEPENDENT

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