

**BRINGS TAXATION LAWS (AMENDMENT) BILL IN LOK SABHA**

In signal to global investors, Govt moves to bury controversial retrospective tax policy

Centre's response to long-pending demand to change UPA law comes amid Vodafone, Cairn disputes

AANCHAL MAGAZINE, SUNNY VERMA & PRANAV MUKUL
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 5

IN A move to bury the controversial policy of retrospective taxation, the government on Thursday proposed amendments to the Income-tax Act and Finance Act, 2012 to effectively state that no tax demand shall be raised for any indirect transfer of Indian assets if the transaction was undertaken before May 28, 2012.



As FM, Pranab Mukherjee behind UPA's retro tax call; Nirmala Sitharaman moved amendment Bill Thursday

The Bill adds that demand raised for indirect transfer of

Indian assets made before May 2012 shall be nullified on fulfilment of specified conditions such as withdrawal or furnishing of an undertaking for withdrawal of pending litigation, and furnishing of an undertaking to the effect that no claim shall be filed.

Following the retrospective amendment moved by the UPA government in 2012, tax demands have been raised in 17 cases, including against British telecom company Vodafone and gas major Cairn Energy.

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NDA called it tax terror; took 7 yrs, adverse verdicts to course-correct

PRANAV MUKUL, AANCHAL MAGAZINE & SUNNY VERMA
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 5

IT TOOK over seven years, and the possibility of an adverse verdict in international arbitration rulings, for the BJP-led government to withdraw the retrospective taxation amendment in I-T Act introduced in March 2012, by Pranab Mukherjee, the then Finance Minister in the UPA government.

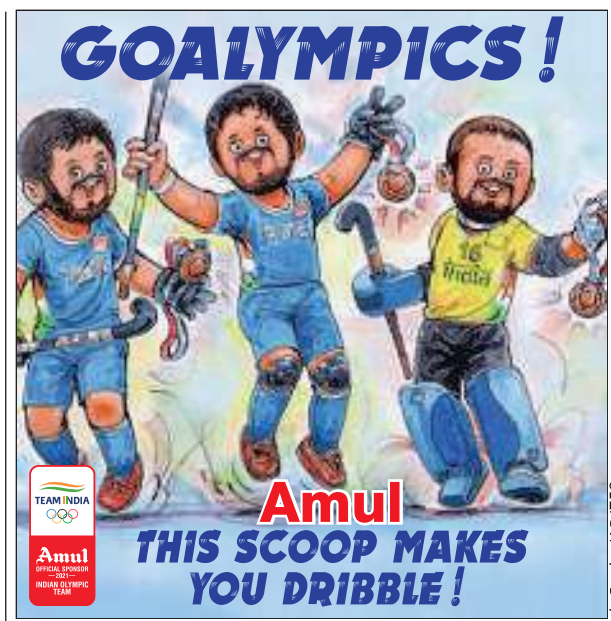
Though delayed, the decision sends out a loud and clear message to global investors that India will course-correct, and bite the bullet even if circumstances around it aren't exactly propitious. The move also sets out India's stand as a nation on the principle of taxation.

Though the Centre stressed on the need to establish its sovereign right to tax, the scrapping of the retrospective levy pro-

vides clarity to investors by removing a major source of ambiguity on taxation laws.

While Mukherjee's Union Budget 2012-13 did not directly mention the issue of the retrospective taxation, a closer reading of the accompanying Finance Bill and the memorandum that formed part of the Budget documents revealed one of the most consequential and controversial

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daCunha/AB/758

CJI bench: Pegasus snooping charges serious, but why no FIR until now

Petitioners seek probe, told by SC to first give plea copies to Govt

ANANTHAKRISHNANG
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 5

DESCRIBING THE allegations of surveillance through the use of the Pegasus spyware as "serious", the Supreme Court Thursday wondered why no one had filed an FIR if there was reason to believe that phones had been hacked. It also pointed out that the allegations first surfaced in 2019.

Chief Justice of India N V Ramana who, along with Justice Surya Kant, was hearing eight petitions seeking an independent probe into the matter, said: "No doubt, the allegations are serious, if the reports are true."

The bench did not issue notice to the Centre and instead asked the parties to first supply copies of their petitions to the government counsel after which it would hear the matter again on August 10.

"Somebody should appear

for the government to take notice," it said, making clear that the question of issuing notice will be considered after hearing from the government as well.

The bench indicated that most of the petitions were based on news reports and should have had something more for the court to set the legal process in motion.

"You all know that there is a prima facie material, as well as credibility of reports, on the basis of which we can order an inquiry etc. Unfortunately, from what I read from the writs, this matter came to light in May 2019. I don't know if any effort was made. Persons who have filed the writ petitions are knowledgeable persons having resources. They should have made more effort to bring forth more material... Some of the petitioners who have filed the pleas are not affected and some claim

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Assam and Mizoram hold talks: 'neutral force', no new deployment by states



Chief Ministers Himanta Biswa Sarma; Zoramthanga

TORA AGARWALA
GUWAHATI, AUGUST 5

FOLLOWING THE first government-level talks between Assam and Mizoram since the July 26 border incident in which six Assam Police personnel were killed in firing and clashes, representatives of the two states resolved Thursday to not have any "fresh deployment" in the disputed areas.

"Both the state governments agree to maintain peace in the inter-state border areas and welcomed the deployment of (a) neutral force by the Government of India in this regard," said a joint statement released after the representatives held a 90-minute meeting in Aizawl Thursday morning.

The statement added a condolence message from the Mizoram government on the July 26 deaths as well as wishes for speedy recovery of those injured.

Late in the evening, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma officially withdrew the travel advisory issued by the state on July 29 that asked people not to travel to Mizoram due to "threat to personal safety". In a tweet, tagging the handles of Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Mizoram CM Zoramthanga, Sarma said this was "pursuant to signing of Joint Statement between Assam and Mizoram... inter alia to maintain peace and harmony".

Assam was represented at the talks by Border Protection and Development Minister Atul Bora, Urban Development Minister Ashok Singhal, and Commissioner and Secretary, Border Protection

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Bronze Medal, Gold Moment



The Indian players celebrate their victory over Germany in Tokyo on Thursday. India won the match, 5-4, to claim the bronze. PTI MORE REPORTS, PAGES 13, 14

First hockey medal at Olympics since 1980: 'don't have any words'



MIHIR VASAVDA
TOKYO, AUGUST 5

GOALKEEPER P R SREEJESH sprinted towards the far corner of the field, slid on his knees, pumped his fists and roared at the empty stands. He jogged back, paid an emotional tribute by lying on the ground with folded hands in front of the goal mouth, somehow found his way to the top of the goal post, made funny faces and laughed hysterically.

Minutes earlier, the joker of the pack had played his

biggest hand.

With just seven seconds left in the playoff, Sreejesh parried a goal-bound shot. And with that one flick of his hand, India exorcised the ghosts of 41 years of barren ignominy, ensuring a 5-4 win against Germany and a bronze medal in the Tokyo Olympics.

The last time India won a hockey medal at the Olympics, cricket was still the country's number two sport, the BJP had been formed less than three months before, tensions between Iraq and Iran were simmering, the Cold War was at its peak — and the USA had defeated the USSR in a dramatic game of ice hockey that was labelled 'Miracle on Ice.'

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BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNY



THE EDITORIAL PAGE

FROM EX-COACH, WITH LOVE

By HARENDRA SINGH
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INSIDE

PM DRAWS AUGUST 5 LINK: ART 370, RAM TEMPLE, HOCKEY MEDAL PAGE 10

Dahiya wins silver: 'this is okay, but my target was gold'

MIHIR VASAVDA
TOKYO, AUGUST 5

IT IS the biggest dilemma for an athlete at the Olympic Games: do you lose gold or win silver?

On Thursday, Ravi Dahiya became only the sixth athlete in India's sporting history to win a silver medal at the Olympics. But when he was told to go backstage for the medal ceremony, he trudged across reluctantly.

Even on the Games podium, the highest point of an athlete's career, Dahiya had the look of someone who had been forced to stand there. His glum face stood in sharp contrast to those of the other winners as he picked up the medal from a shiny tray

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Ravi Dahiya at the medal ceremony in Tokyo on Thursday. PTI

MANOJ CG & RAVISH TIWARI
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 5

LOST IN the din of the government's move on August 5, 2019 stripping J&K of its special status under Article 370, splitting and downgrading it to two Union Territories, were the resignations of three members of Rajya Sabha.

It was not known then that the resignations of Bhubaneswar Kalita of Congress and SP's Surendra Singh Nagar and Sanjay Seth were part of carefully orchestrated moves by the BJP to ensure smooth passage of its legislative plan for the day.

It now emerges that these three members of Rajya Sabha were approached by the ruling party and establishment in the final hours leading to the August 5 announcement.



Bhubaneswar Kalita

A top government functionary, in an unmarked vehicle driven by an Assam politician, visited Kalita's New Delhi house the night before the announcement on J&K to persuade him to dump the Congress and cross over to the BJP.

Such was the secrecy and urgency, sources said, that even Kalita seemed surprised. As Plan B, ruling establishment members had also involved Kalita's relatives and others close to him. They had been brought to New Delhi from Assam to convince him — this option was never exercised because

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PAGE 1 ANCHOR

LALMANI VERMA
HARIDWAR, AUGUST 5

VIJENDER SINGH and three friends, riding motorcycles from Ludhiana, reach the Mandawar check-post on the Uttar Pradesh-Uttarakhand border in Haridwar district on Tuesday morning. Questioned by the Uttarakhand Police, Vijender says he is going to Haridwar for "sewa kanya (offering service)" at Har ki Pauri. However, the group neither have a negative RT-PCR report nor are they registered with the state government portal monitoring entry into Uttarakhand.

Sub-Inspector Anand Chauhan asks the four to turn back. "There is no entry in Haridwar till August 7 because Kanwar Yatra is banned. You don't have any valid document to prove a genuine reason for visiting Haridwar," Chauhan tells Vijender, even as a constable notes down the registration numbers of their motorcycles.

Starting July 25 when the Kanwar Yatra pilgrimage began, every day, at this check-post alone, over 150 vehicles are turned away, as the Uttarakhand Police tries to separate potential Kanwar Yatra from those with genuine reasons and negative re-

ports, to implement a state government ban on entry of pilgrims due to Covid fears. As per a Haridwar police report, 26,217 Kanwar Yatra had been sent back from over 15 border check-posts and inside the city till Wednesday.

While Vijender insists he is not a Kanwar Yatra and not aware of restrictions on entry into Uttarakhand, Chauhan says they will record the four friends as Kanwar Yatra as "they did not have negative Covid reports and registration, and had no valid reason to visit Haridwar". "We assume that they were Kanwar Yatra and going to Har ki Pauri for collect-



Over 150 vehicles are turned away daily at the Mandawar check-post in Haridwar. Lalmani Verma

ing Gangajal," the S-I says.

Around 20 police personnel guard the Mandawar check-post at all times, in two shifts of 12 hours each. Overall, 800 police personnel are deployed on Kanwar duty at different locations across Haridwar. With most of the Kanwar Yatra coming to Haridwar from Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh, all vehicles from these states are checked.

About an hour after Vijender has left, Rakesh Tyagi arrives with his wife and two children. The couple are vaccinated and urge the policemen to let them in. When a police personnel asks

him to collect Gangajal instead from the tanker stationed near the check-post by the government for pilgrims, Tyagi says, "We have a religious function in the family after a few days and need to take a dip in the Ganga as part of the ritual."

He promises to return straight after visiting the temple, and police finally let the family go through, but after they have registered on a government portal.

The most insistent are those coming with ashes of family members for immersion in the Ganga. A police personnel says that between Monday and Tuesday, more than 200 families

had approached the check-post for the purpose.

One of them is Vample Singh, here from Sirsa with the ashes of her aunt. Police stop the family as 11 of them are packed in a vehicle, with none carrying a Covid report. SOP only allows four for immersion of ashes, and the family is told to assign some, who are cleared after undergoing a rapid antigen test.

The SP (City) and nodal in-charge for Kanwar Yatra, Kamlesh Upadhyay, says, "Segregating Kanwar Yatra from other tourists is the main challenge for police

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Kolkata



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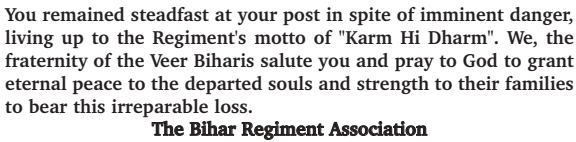


Don’t miss Neha Kakkar’s LIVE performance during the launch. Lots more exciting content from mega entertainers like Salim Merchant, Danish Sait, Radhika Apte and Nikhil Chinapa coming up on the app. Stay tuned!

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MARTYRDOM On 06 AUGUST
In proud memory of the Veer Biharis of 15th Battalion, The Bihar Regiment, who laid down their lives in the Siachen Sector when the Shyok River swept their camp following flash floods in Ladakh on 6 August 2010.



प्रमुख सचिव, समाज कल्याण, उत्तराखण्ड शासन के पत्र सं 911/XVII-2/21-01/08(2021) टी.सी. दिनांक 30.07.2021 द्वारा समाज कल्याण विभाग की विभिन्न योजनाओं के संचालन तथा प्रयत्न एवं छात्रवृत्ति योजनाओं पर पी.एफ.एम.सी. /डी.बी.टी. प्रणाली टी.सी. किये जाने हेतु राज्य में एक तकनीकी सपोर्ट एजेंसी के चयन हेतु तैयार आर.एफ.पी. को संमत वित्तीय नियमों, उत्तराखण्ड अधिष्ठापित निगमावली, 2017 एवं समय-समय पर संशोधित नियमों में निहित प्रावधानों के अन्तर्गत अनलाईन [Website www.uktenders.gov.in](http://Website.www.uktenders.gov.in) के माध्यम से दिनांक 25.08.2021 तक अभिलेखि की अभिव्यक्ति / निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती हैं।

निविदा से सम्बन्धित समस्त प्रश्न/जानकारी/शर्तों का विवरण **Website www.uktenders.gov.in** पर डाउनलोड/प्राप्त किया जा सकता है। निविदा प्रश्न मूल्य **₹ 1180/- GST सहित** (जो रिफण्ड नहीं होगा) तथा **₹ 2.00 लाख** की धरोहर राशि निविदा प्रश्न में दिये गये विवरण के अनुसार विभागीय खाते में **Online** माध्यम से जमा कराया जाना आवश्यक है। अपरिहार्य स्थिति में बिना कारणा बताये किसी भी निविदा को स्वीकृत अथवा अस्वीकृत करने तथा निविदा की पूर्ण प्रक्रिया को निरस्त करने का अधिकार अधोहस्ताक्षरी के पास सुरक्षित रहेगा।

निदेशक,

Re tender for Providing Cooking Service to hostels of University of Mysore under rate contract, as per the KTPP Act 2000Chapter-2Rules 3(1) as per the conditions and clauses of standard tender document K/G through e-procurement portal only.

2419318/386/429 or Website: <https://www.eproc.karnataka.gov.in>

Co. Ltd. (BGCL), North Bihar Power Distribution Co. Ltd. (NBPDC) and South Bihar Power Distribution Co. Ltd. (SBPDCL) and for the determination of the transmission tariff & SLDC charges and Tariff for retail sale of electricity by the NBPDC and SBPDCL for FY 2022-23 as per applicable Regulations.

1	Name of work	Providing service support for operation and maintenance of low conductivity water system & compressed air system at VECC.
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be held responsible for such contents, nor for any loss or damage incurred as a result of transactions with companies, associations or individuals advertising in its newspapers or Publications. We therefore recommend that

Assam Electronics Development Corporation (AMTRON) becomes the first state PSU in the country to acquire a National level NLD, ILD and ISP Licence. This National Long Distance (NLD), International Long Distance (ILD) and Internet Service Provider (Category-A) Licence agreement was signed between Department of Telecommunications, Ministry of Communications Govt. Of India and Assam Electronics Development Corporation (AMTRON). This will empower AMTRON to develop and bring the long awaited high speed internet connectivity to the North Eastern region including countries of Bhutan, Nepal, Myanmar and Bangladesh. The Agreement was signed by The Director on behalf of Department of Telecommunications Govt. Of India and Managing Director of AMTRON on behalf of Assam Electronics Development Corporation Ltd(AMTRON). This licence Authorization is valid for 20 years and is renewable before the expiry.

Kumar Engineering, a pioneer in Automobile and Agriculture tools manufacturing sector in North Eastern region has opened a manufacturing plant at Dharapur in outskirts of Assam's capital city of Guwahati on Monday. Inaugurating the manufacturing plant, Joint Commissioner of Assam Police, Partha Sarathi Mahanta said that Kumar Engineering has performed fantastic jobs during the Covid pandemic time as the company not only continues its operation but also has not adopted any pay cut measures of its employees, which was almost prevalent in company cum corporate affairs across the globe during the time. The company will produce E- Rickshaw, Power Tiller and Agri Rotavator in the manufacturing plant. The total production capacity of the plant is 1200 units per month. 760 local youths have been recruited in the manufacturing plant. The company said keeping in view of Prime Minister's ambitious 'Make in India' programme, to generate employments and speed up development process, it has opened the manufacturing plant in Assam, which is in fact the first automobile and Agriculture tool manufacturing plant in North East.

PSU General Insurance Employees went on Strike today against the recent GIGNA Amendment bill which was passed in Lok Sabha. The employees of Oriental, National, United India and New India General Insurance Cos carried out Demonstrations at all centres. The Slogans were against the Bill and the employees were ready for future demonstrations if the Bill was not withdrawn. The representatives of the UNION told that the Bill will make way for Privatisation of the 4 PSUs who play major role in running Social Welfare Schemes.

Chittaranjan, World Environment Day was observed by CLW Women's Welfare Organization. Based on this year's theme of 'Ecosystem Restoration' Smt. Namita Kashyup, President of CLW-WWO, Shri Satish Kumar Kashyup, General Manager, CLW, members of CLW-WWO and senior officers actively participated and together planted a total of 101 saplings of different species in various area of CLW. This plantation drive continued for two days. Smt Namita Kashyup urged everyone to plant a sapling for environmental protection. This plantation drive was carried out with all laid down COVID 19 protocols and with proper social distancing norms.

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Prof. Harish Hirani, Director, CSIR-CMERI, Durgapur, delivered the Keynote Speech on 3rd August 2021 in the 'Industrial Motivation Campaign on Awareness to MSMEs for transition from Single Use Plastics (SUP) to alternate materials' organised by MSME-DI, Kolkata in association with the Indian Plastic Federation. Shri Anindya Roy, Regional Head, Reliance Industries and Shri Rajesh Gauba, Head, Sustainability & Recycling also delivered their perspectives on management of Plastic Wastes.

Bank of India Net Profit stood at Rs. 720 Cr. up by 188% over Q4FY21, with Operating Profit at Rs. 2,806 Cr up by 34% over Q4FY21. Non-Interest Income grew by 39% YoY & NIM improved by 15 bps sequentially with NIM up by 7%. Retail Credit grew to 10.57% YoY, Agriculture Credit grew by 11.08% YoY & MSME Credit grew by 11.45% YoY. Advances grew by 11.02% YoY and it constitutes 51.36% of Advances and CASA deposits increased by 13.80% YoY. Gross NPA ratio down by 40bps YoY Net NPA ratio down by 23bps. Credit Cost declined by 241 bps over Q4FY21 and Slippage ratio declined by 96 bps over Q4FY21. YoY Provision Coverage Ratio (PCR) at 86.17% improved by 130 bps & YoY CRAR stood at 15.07% higher than both Mar'21 and Jun'20 RAM. Further, Global Deposits increased by 4.73% YoY to Rs. 6,23,385 Cr in June'21. Domestic deposits went up by 6.71% YoY to Rs. 5,52,303 Cr during the same period. Domestic CASA went up by 13.80% YoY to Rs. 2,35,980 Cr in Jun'21 & CASA percentage stood at 43.22%. As on 30.06.2021, Bank's Total Capital Adequacy Ratio (CRAR) was at 15.07% against 14.93% in Mar'21. CET-1 ratio stood at 11.52% as on Jun'21 against 11.51% in Mar'21. Priority Sector advances increased by 10.58% YoY to Rs. 1,39,020 Cr in Jun'21 which constitutes 39.65% of ANBC. Advances to Small & Marginal farmers constitutes 9.35% to ANBC & that to Weaker sections constitutes 12.10%, which are well above the regulatory norm. Sanctions under PMSVANidhi 97.82% & disbursement, 96.91%.

Records continue to galore at SAIL's ISCO Steel Plant. Team castor has yet again created a new record by making the longest ever casting sequence from Bloom Cum Beam Blank Caster (Caster No. 3) of Steel Melting Shop. Bettering its previous best of 17 heat casting sequence, Caster 3 has achieved the longest ever sequence of 20 heat casting sequence on 3rd of August 2021. This feat has been achieved by SMS team in 24 hours 17 minutes. While achieving this feat, 2949 tonnes of crude steel was produced. Earlier, Caster number 3 held the record for the longest casting sequence of 17 heats, producing 2526 tonnes of crude steel, which was achieved in 20 hours and 2 minutes. AV Kamalakhar, CEO, ISCO Steel Plant congratulated ED (Works) K A Singh, Chief General Manager (Steel Melting Shop) K Ramakrishna, Joydip Pal, GM (CCP) and their entire team for creating new record and appreciated the efforts being made by them.

Under the incessant thrust for achieving back its glorious past, Jamalpur Workshop has been continuously striving in creating new milestones of achieving increasing number of Wagons being Periodic Overhauled per month. Despite of dark clouds of worldwide COVID-19 pandemic & disruption/delay in supply lines, the achievement of HIGHEST EVER output of 610 wagons in July 2021, followed by 570 wagons in June 2021, 555 wagons in January 2021 and 550 wagons in December 2020 has been made.

The output of 610 wagon comprises of 399 open Wagons (BOXN and variants including Stainless steel ones), 154 Hopper wagons (BOBRN & BOBYN), 35 flat wagons (BRN, BFNS & Variants), 10 covered wagons (BCN and variants including Stainless steel ones) and 12 guard vans (BVZC).

In July 2021, another HIGHEST EVER of 2,526 wheelsets turned out to the lot which has firmly supported the above noteworthy achievements.

These notable outputs have been brought to reality after introduction of the activities to the Supporting shops. Presently, Wagon Periodic Overhauling is being done in all the Major Repair shops (WRS-I, WRS-II, WRS-III, WRS-IV) and Supporting shops. The Wagon Periodic Overhauling started at Eastern Railway Workshop, Jamalpur in August 1992. The Shops which were used to manufacture steam loco were modified for wagon Periodic Overhauling. At present BOXN, BOXNH, BCN, BOBRN, BOBYN, BRN type wagons are being Periodic Overhauled here. Additional Rolling Stock Programme works like Rehabilitation of BOXN wagon, Rebuilding of BOXN wagon, Retro-fitting of twin pipe air brake system are being executed along with Periodic Overhauling activity.

Appointment Committee of the Cabinet have approved the appointment of Arun Arora as General Manager Eastern Rly. He is the topper of IRSMIE 1984 batch. Prior to this appointment, he was posted as Additional Member (AM) / Rly Board since October 2020 and was handling the important work charges of AM/Environment & AM/Mechanical Engineering. During his distinguished career spanning over 35 years, he has successfully handled many important & challenging assignments which include Principal Chief Mechanical Engineer/ Northern Railway the largest zone of IR & Divisional Railway Manager/ Delhi, the biggest division of IR. In addition, some other diverse key assignments include Chief Rolling Stock Engineers/ Operations & Freight/ N.Rly, CWO/DFCCIL, Director Mechanical Engineering/ Freight/Rly Board, Chief Public Relations Officer/ N.Rly& Deputy Secretary in Ministry of Steel & Mines.

Furthering the commitment to the safety of young people in India, Instagram today launched a Parents Guide in Bengali for people across West Bengal to learn from. The Guide is aimed at helping young people be safe, by informing parents about all the safety features that exist on the platform.

Roche today announced the launch of Evrysdi® (risdiplam), the first and only approved treatment in India for Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) patients. Evrysdi® was first approved by the US FDA in August 2020 and is today available in India within 11 months of the US approval. Since its launch, over 4000 SMA patients across 50+ countries have benefitted from Evrysdi®.

WRITES TO PM MODI

Bengal being deprived of vaccines: Mamata

Says BJP-ruled states getting more vaccines, voices fear of Covid situation turning grim if jabs are not enough

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, AUGUST 5

WEST BENGAL Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, yet again, wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday claiming the state is getting “much lower number of doses” despite having a high population density. Voicing fear that the Covid situation may turn grim again if there aren’t enough doses, she urged the PM to ramp up vaccine supply to the state.

“West Bengal will require around 14 crore doses of Covid vaccines to cover all the eligible people. Presently, we are administering four lakh doses per day and are capable of administering 11 lakh doses per day. Yet, we are getting a much lower number of doses despite having a very high population density and a higher rate of urbanisation,” read an excerpt from the CM’s letter.

She alleged that several letters sent to the PM on the issue earlier “did not receive due attention” at the Centre. “I’m sorry to say the central government is providing a larger number of vaccine doses to other states. I have no problem if any other state receives a higher number of vaccine doses, but I cannot remain a mute spectator to see Bengal deprived,” she said. Meanwhile, the CM, on

MULLING REOPENING OF SCHOOLS AFTER DURGA PUJA: CM

■ Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday said that her government is considering reopening schools and colleges after Durga Puja vacation. She, however, added that nothing has been finalised yet. Educational institutions in the country have remained closed since last March with the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. **ENS**

Thursday chaired a ‘Global Advisory Board on Covid’ meeting on a possible third wave, also featuring, among others, Nobel laureate economist Abhijit Vinayak Banerjee.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, Banerjee said, “The biggest problem is that the Centre is not capable of generating a supply of vaccines for the country. If there were enough vaccines, these claims wouldn’t have arisen. We have not received the promised level of supply for the nation.”

At a press conference later in the day, the CM claimed that Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka — all ruled by BJP —

had received more vaccine doses than West Bengal.

“In terms of population, Gujarat, is smaller than West Bengal but has been given double the number of doses. I don’t have a problem with it. But I have a problem when our state is not getting enough vaccines. Karnataka’s population is 4 crore, while Bengal’s is about 11 crore. But we have received fewer doses,” Mamata said.

The CM added that the positivity rate in the state is currently at 1.57% and it was largely down to the state government’s efforts. She also appealed to people, especially those who aren’t vaccinated yet, to wear masks. She said parents must also make their children wear masks. “Please ensure that your children wear masks when they go out,” she said.

In her letter, Mamata wrote, “We were the first to raise the issue with the Central Government on providing vaccines free of cost. The Centre did not respond to the subject for a long time resulting in inadequate vaccination coverage of people in the country. In fact, we in Bengal had even requested the Government of India in February, 2021 to allow us to procure vaccines directly from manufacturers for the people of the state. But there was no response.” —WITH PTI INPUTS

STATE QUESTIONS EXCLUSION OF 9.5 LAKH BENGAL FARMERS FROM PM-KISAN SCHEME

Kolkata: The West Bengal government has written to the Centre questioning the exclusion of 9.5 lakh farmers of the state from the list of beneficiaries of the PM-Kisan scheme, a senior official said on Thursday.

The Centre credits Rs 6,000 per year in the bank accounts of the beneficiaries of the scheme in three equal instalments.

“We don’t understand why such a large number of farmers from the state have been excluded from the scheme. We have written to the Centre expressing concern over the issue. This has happened due to some technical error on the Union government’s part. We don’t want our farmers to suffer and remain deprived of the scheme’s benefits because of it,” a state government official said, adding the West Bengal government had sent the names of 44.8 lakh beneficiaries to the Centre, of whom 9.5 lakh have been left out. **PTI**

Suvendu says BJP workers being denied vaccines, TMC minister calls claims false

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, AUGUST 5

ALLEGING THAT the TMC government in West Bengal was depriving BJP workers of Covid-19 vaccines, the Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly, Suvendu Adhikari, on Thursday said that he would urge the Centre to directly send vaccines to Central government-run hospitals in the state. The TMC government rubbished the charge, saying the BJP leader was doing “petty politics”.

Addressing party workers at the launch of its health volunteers campaign, Adhikari said, “Yesterday, I spoke with newly-appointed general managers of Eastern and South Eastern Railways. Vaccination is being done in Railway hospitals. We have to include our prominent workers living in remote areas in this vaccination process. We have to prepare a list of our workers and supporters who are being deprived of Covid-19 vaccines because they voted for the BJP. In various places, those who had supported the BJP are being denied vaccines. We have to take these people to alternative places

for vaccination.”

At present, the Central government-run hospitals get vaccines from the state government.

“I called Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya and also spoke with Gajendra Sekhawatji. I have requested them to directly send vaccines to the Central government-run health infrastructures in the state... be it railways, airports, ports and ESI hospitals. We feel that there is a need to give these people an opportunity to receive vaccines,” Adhikari said.

Reacting to this allegation, state minister Shashi Panja said, “This is untrue. There is no discrimination when it comes to administering vaccines. The Centre is depriving the state of adequate vaccines. It is sending fewer vaccines than what is required. They are doing petty politics over this.”

Meanwhile, Adhikari wrote a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, saying that the state government was responsible for the floods in Bengal. The BJP leader alleged that despite being notified by the DVC of its plan to release water from the dams, the state government did not make people aware of it and made no announcement in this regard.



Abhijit Vinayak Banerjee with Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee at Nabanna on Thursday. **CMO**

‘Third wave could further drop GDP forecast, Centre should be spending more’

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, AUGUST 5

NOBEL LAUREATE economist Abhijit Vinayak Banerjee on Thursday said that the impending third wave of Covid-19 could adversely impact the GDP, and its growth rate might go down to 7 per cent, even below the IMF’s recent projection of 9.5 per cent.

Banerjee told mediapersons after holding a meeting of the West Bengal government’s Global Advisory Board (GAB), at the state secretariat, Nabanna.

“The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has cut its economic growth forecast for India from 12.5% to 9.5% for the fiscal year to March 31, 2022. But I suspect it may drop to 6% to 7% at the end. I can’t give it in writing. But if another wave hits it may drop further. I hope it doesn’t happen,” Banerjee said.

He criticised the Central government over rising fuel prices, saying the government should have been more open-handed with their spending during the pandemic.

“The Centre is too unwilling to do what the US and European countries are doing, which is printing money and spending it. That would have been a better policy in the current context particularly when we are not avoiding inflation,” he said.

Swarup Sarkar, former regional director of WHO, said, “It will not be possible to check another wave of Covid-19 till the time 80%-90% of the citizens are vaccinated... Government figures suggest that it won’t be possible to vaccinate 80%-90% of the people before June 2022. Till then, we need to continue the preventive measures.”

Trying to stitch together ‘peoples’ grand alliance’ in Tripura against BJP: TMC

DEBRAJ DEB
AGARTALA, AUGUST 5

THE TRINAMOOL Congress, which received a shot in the arm recently in Tripura with the defection of Congress leaders Prakash Das and Subal Bhowmik, among others, announced on Thursday that it was working to cobble up a ‘peoples’ grand alliance’ under its leadership before the 2023 Assembly elections.

Announcing the party’s strategy for the polls, which is still one-and-half years away, Trinamool leader Kunal Ghosh, on a visit to the state, said all the welfare schemes currently implemented in Bengal will be introduced in Tripura if his party is voted to power.

“People here are aware of ‘Kanyashree’, ‘Rupashree’ and ‘Swastha Sathi’, among other schemes in Bengal. They will also be implemented in this state when a son of the soil, under the leadership of Mamata Banerjee, forms a government of the Trinamool Congress. In line with her vision, it will be a government of the people’s grand alliance under leadership of Trinamool Congress,” Ghosh said at a press conference in Agartala on Thursday evening.

Meanwhile, on Thursday, Trinamool activists, led by Bhowmik, staged a demonstration at Agartala seeking clarification from the police on steps taken to nab culprits responsible for the alleged attack on the convoy of the party’s all-India

general secretary Abhishek Banerjee during his visit here a couple of days ago.

Banerjee visited Tripura shortly after 23 I-PAC members, who came here for a ‘political survey’, were booked for violating Covid-19 norms. He announced that the Trinamool has made Tripura its main target ahead of the next Assembly polls.

Ghosh said on Thursday a delegation from the party visited the police to know if they had arrested any of the culprits for attacking Banerjee but didn’t get any response. They didn’t even get any response from the DGP, following submission of a memorandum on the issue.

“We were restrained by the police as we were trying to meet them. Instead of replying to our query, they threatened us with action. From my experiences today, I feel the BJP is scared,” Ghosh said.

Hinting at a larger movement, he said his party had served an ultimatum to the state police till Friday morning to give their reply, failing which they will be responsible for whatever follows.

He claimed that Tripura suffered during two decades of Marxist rule and its prospects are declining further under the BJP rule.

Citing the Trinamool’s landslide victory in the Bengal polls, Ghosh said the BJP tried to grab power in the state but lost to “Bengal’s daughter”.

Claiming that the Trinamool is the only alternative to the BJP, he said he is hopeful that the people of Tripura will vote the party to power in the next Assembly polls.



MONSOON WEDDING

A wedding party returns to the groom's house on a boat in Amta in flood-hit Howrah district, Thursday. **Partha Paul**

TATA TATA POWER
The Tata Power Company Limited
Registered Office: Bombay House, 24, Horni Mody Street, Mumbai 400 001
Tel: 91 22 6665 8282 Fax: 91 22 6665 8801
CIN: L28920MH1919PLC000567
Email: tatapower@tatapower.com Website: www.tatapower.com

NOTICE OF RECORD DATE
NOTICE is hereby given pursuant to Section 91 of the Companies Act, 2013 that Wednesday, 1st September 2021 has been fixed as the Record Date for the purpose of payment of:
i. Annual interest on the 1,600 – 9.15% Secured Redeemable Non-Convertible Debentures (Series K to O) aggregating ₹5,62,500 each and
ii. The redemption proceeds of the Series-K of these Debentures (INE245A07374), aggregating ₹16,00,00,000.
both due on 17th September 2021.
For The Tata Power Company Limited **H. M. Mistry**
Company Secretary **(FCS: 3606)**
Place : Mumbai
Dated : 5th August 2021

TIDEL PARK LTD
No.4, Rajiv Gandhi Salai, Taramani, Chennai 600 113
Website: **www.tidelpark.com**

Notification No. TIDEL/03/2021-22
TIDEL Park Ltd., propose to promote start-up companies through TIDEL Thulir. The start-up incubation Centre of TIDEL PARK LTD. TIDEL invites Expression of Interest (EOI) from eligible companies for this initiative. For notification, please visit **www.tidelpark.com**.
MANAGING DIRECTOR

CONVERGENCE ENERGY SERVICES LIMITED
(A wholly owned subsidiary of EESL)

RECRUITMENT NOTICE
CESL, a wholly owned subsidiary of Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL), which is a JV of PSUs under Ministry of Power, Government of India invites applications for the position of Manager (Commercial & BD) (Regular), Manager (Project Monitoring Cell) (Regular) and Manager (Public Relations) (Regular).
Details w.r.t detailed advertisement, eligibility criteria, selection mode, online application etc. shall be made available on CESL website under CESL HR Career Section from 06/08/2021. **www.convergence.co.in**

MAHARISHI MARKANDESHWAR
(DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY)
Mullana-Ambala, Haryana
(Established under Section 3 of the UGC Act, 1956)
(Accredited by NAAC with Grade 'A')

ADMISSION NOTICE 2021
(for Ph.D. PROGRAMME)
Applications are invited by 26-8-2021 for admission to the Ph. D. Programme in the following disciplines:

Sr. No.	Name of Discipline		
TECHNICAL STREAM			
1	Agriculture	11 Management	
2	Biotechnology	12 Mathematics	
3	Chemistry	13 Mechanical Engineering	
4	Civil Engineering	14 Pharmacy	
5	Computer Sc. & Engineering	15 Physics	
6	Computer Sc. & Applications	MEDICAL STREAM	
7	Dietetics	1 Bio-Chemistry	
8	Electronics & Comm. Engg.	2 Community Medicine	
9	Electrical Engineering	3 Pharmacology	
10	Law	4 Physiotherapy	
		DENTAL STREAM	
		1	Public Health Dentistry

The MM(OU) also offers Fellowships of Rs.18,000/- P.M. with Contingency upto Rs.6,000/- per annum for disciplines other than Medical/Dental/Nursing streams) and some of the selected candidates may be considered for the award of Fellowships on their merit and research aptitude.
Except for those exempted from Entrance Test as per conditions mentioned in the Prospectus, Admissions will be made on the basis of merit of Entrance Test to be held on 31-8-2021 in ONLINE MODE at 11.00 A.M. followed by interview on the same date in the same mode. Those exempted from Entrance Test will also have to appear for interview on 31-8-2021.
Prospectus containing Application Form and other details can be obtained from the counter of the MM(OU) on payment of Rs. 1000/- or can be downloaded from the website of the MM(OU) in which case a Bank Draft of equivalent amount drawn in the name of the MM(OU) will have to be enclosed with the Application.
REGISTRAR
Ph: 01731-274475-78 | Fax: 274495
Website: **www.mmumullana.org** | Email: **info@mmumullana.org**

SML ISUZU LIMITED
Regd. Office : Village Aaron, Distt. Shahid Bhagat Singh Nagar (Karnahar) -144 533, Punjab. CIN : L50101PB1983PLC005516, Website: **www.smlisuzu.com**, Email Id : **investor@smlisuzu.com**, T : 91 1861 270225, F: 91 1861 270223

EXTRACT OF UNAUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER ENDED 30 JUNE 2021

Rs. Crores, except per equity share data

Particulars	Quarter Ended		Year Ended	
	30.06.2021	31.03.2021	30.06.2020	31.03.2021
	Unaudited	Audited (Refer note2)	Unaudited	Audited
Total income	100.32	259.43	29.51	595.97
Net profit / (loss) for the period (before tax and exceptional items)	(33.44)	(20.00)	(52.25)	(133.37)
Net profit / (loss) for the period before tax (after exceptional items)	(33.44)	(20.00)	(52.26)	(133.37)
Net profit / (loss) for the period after tax (after exceptional items)	(33.44)	(20.12)	(52.26)	(133.49)
Total comprehensive income / (loss) for the period (comprising Profit / (loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax))	(33.04)	(14.59)	(53.25)	(129.30)
Equity Share Capital	14.48	14.48	14.48	14.48
Other equity (excluding revaluation reserves)	-	-	-	241.09
Earnings Per Share (of Rs.10/- each) (for continuing and discontinued operations)	(23.11)	(13.90)	(36.11)	(92.24)
1. Basic (Rs.)	(23.11)	(13.90)	(36.11)	(92.24)
2. Diluted (Rs.)	(23.11)	(13.90)	(36.11)	(92.24)

Notes:
1. The above is an extract of the detailed format of Annual/Quarterly Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Annual/Quarterly Financial Results are available on the websites of Stock Exchange(s) (**www.bseindia.com**, **www.nseindia.com**) and on Company's website (**www.smlisuzu.com**).
2. The figures for the quarter ended 31 March 2021 and the corresponding quarter ended in the previous year, as reported in these financial results, are the balancing figures between audited figures in respect of the full financial year and the published year to date figures upto the end of third quarter of the relevant financial year. Also, the figures upto the end of the third quarter had only been reviewed and not subjected to audit.

For and on behalf of the Board of Directors
(Junya Yamanishi)
Managing Director & CEO
DIN: 09174162
Place: Tokyo, Japan
Date : 05 August 2021

BRIEFLY
Four firearms seized, 1 held

Malda: A 33-year-old man was arrested and four country-made firearms seized from his possession in Malda district on Thursday, police said. Acting on a tip-off, police apprehended the man in Katagah in English Bazaar police station area and seized the four country-made guns from his possession, an officer said. The accused, who hails from Kaliachak in the district, has been booked under the Arms Act, he said. **PTI**

New ER GM takes charge

Kolkata: Arun Arora, the newly appointed general manager of Eastern Railway, got down to work on Thursday, chairing a meeting with principal heads of departments, divisional railway managers and chief works managers at the Eastern Railway headquarters. The new GM held discussions on punctuality of train services, safety drives, passenger amenity works & vaccination during the meeting. **ENS**

Stoppages of trains at Barahiya and Gahmar stations on temporary basis

Following special trains will stop temporarily at stations as under with effect from 05.08.2021.

Special Train Name & No.	Station	Arr.	Dep.
02351 Howrah-Rajendranagar (T)	Barahiya	03.40	03.42
02352 Rajendranagar (T)-Howrah	Barahiya	22.58	23.00
03401 Bhagalpur-Danapur	Barahiya	08.46	08.48
03402 Danapur-Bhagalpur	Barahiya	18.23	18.25
02333 Howrah-Prayagraj Rambag	Gahmar	06.20	06.22
02334 Prayagraj Rambag-Howrah	Gahmar	20.06	20.08
03005 Howrah-Amritsar	Gahmar	05.38	05.40
03006 Amritsar-Howrah	Gahmar	19.17	19.19

Chief Passenger Transportation Manager
EASTERN RAILWAY

राष्ट्रीय डोप परीक्षण प्रयोगशाला (राडोप्र)
(स्वा गमने और खेल मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार)
National Dope Testing Laboratory (NDTL)
(Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India)

ADVT No.3.2021
Applications are invited from eligible candidates to fill up the vacant posts by deputation (including short term contract) as detailed below.

Sl. No.	Name of the Post	PML	No of posts
1.	Scientist E	13	1
2.	Deputy Director (Admin)	11	1
3.	Senior Technical Officer (Information Technology)	10	1
4.	Section Officer	7	1

For detailed advertisement containing Qualification, experience, application format and other terms and conditions are available at NDTL website: **www.ndtindia.com**
Last date for receipt of application: 45 days from the date of appearance of advertisement in the Employment News.
-Sd-
Deputy Director (Admin)

TATA TATA STEEL LIMITED
Registered Office: Bombay House, 24, Horni Mody Street, Fort, Mumbai - 400 001, India
Tel.: +91 22 6665 8282 Email: **cosec@tatasteel.com**
Website: **www.tatasteel.com**
CIN: L27100MH1907PLC000260

NOTICE
A meeting of the Board of Directors of Tata Steel Limited (the 'Company') will be held on Thursday, August 12, 2021, *inter alia*, to consider and take on record the audited Standalone and unaudited Consolidated financial results of the Company for the quarter ended June 30, 2021.

The said notice and the financial results will be made available on the website of the Company at **www.tatasteel.com** as well as on the website of the National Stock Exchange of India Limited at **www.nseindia.com** and BSE Limited at **www.bseindia.com**.

Tata Steel Limited
Sd/-
Parvathesam Kanchinadham
Company Secretary &
Chief Legal Officer (Corporate & Compliance)

August 4, 2021
Mumbai

TATA STEEL

A for Aggressive, B for Bully

ABVP routinely takes offence to seminars, film screenings, syllabi. Its strategy of defame-delegitimise-disrupt is effective, and dangerous to country’s academic culture



APOORVANAND AND GAUHAR RAZA

THE WITHDRAWAL OF Dr Hari Singh Gour University in Sagar, Madhya Pradesh, from an international seminar on “Cultural and Linguistic Hurdles in the Achievement of Scientific Temper” due to bullying by the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad and the local police must not be treated lightly.

The university had approved the topic, the collaboration and the speakers, but started wavering after the ABVP threatened it with disruption and legal action since there were names in the list of speakers it did not like. According to the student wing of the RSS, these speakers were “anti nationals” it could not tolerate.

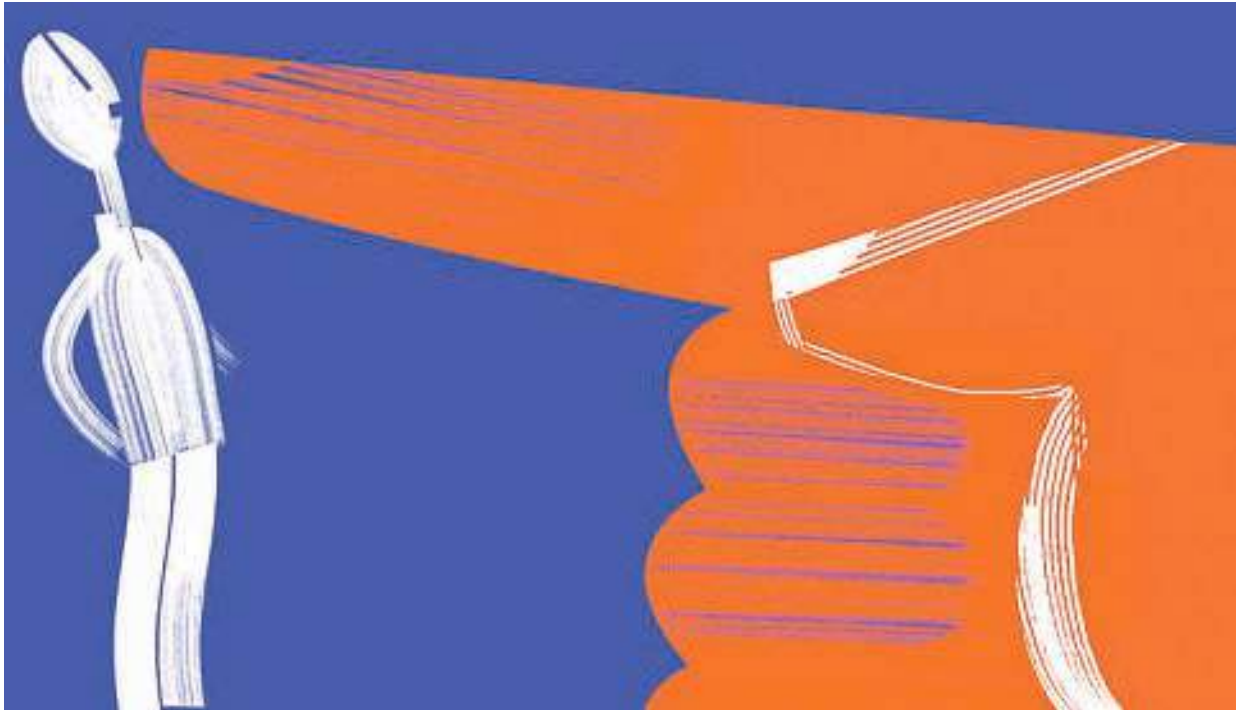
The university succumbed finally after the local police shot off a letter to it at the behest of the ABVP stating that it had “references to the past history, anti-national mentality and caste-related statements of the speakers attending the webinar”. It warned the university that it might face action under Section 505 of the Indian Penal Code if something went wrong as the webinar was being “perceived as targeting a particular caste or community”. The pressure was apparently too much for the university and it buckled at the last moment. A victory for the ABVP.

It is yet another one and only the latest in the list of disruptions of academic programmes by the ABVP, the fraternal organisation of the BJP. Only two months ago, Gilbert Sebastian, an assistant professor of the Central University of Kerala, was suspended by the university because the ABVP reportedly took offence to his class on fascism. From Kerala to Haryana, there are numerous stories of disrupted and aborted seminars, film screenings and classrooms and censoring of syllabi, either directly by the ABVP or at their behest by the authorities.

The ABVP routinely takes offence to the content of the programme or the people involved in it. Either the subject matter of the academic programme is “anti Hindu”, “anti Indian” or “anti national” or the speakers or participants are. In the case of the Sagar University incident, the speakers, Gauhar Raza and Apoorvanand, were declared to be anti-national. How can they be hosted by a government-funded university?

One needs to point out, though, that the organisers at the Anthropology Department of Sagar University refused to be browbeaten. They refused to disinvite us and resolved to continue with the preparation for the seminar. At this stage, the desperate ABVP went to a willing police for help. The university authorities have so many more things to look after. One seminar cannot be allowed to jeopardise the material interests of the authorities and the university, especially when the threat comes from the superintendent of police. So, they asked the department to back off.

Defame, delegitimise and disrupt. This is how the ABVP and its fraternal organisations work in destroying the academic culture in India. A very effective method. Because once you make some names controversial, people would like to keep away from them. We have



C R Sasikumar

numerous stories of invitations rescinded, seminars and talks cancelled, as the names involved had been made controversial.

People are not the only targets. Institutions like the JNU have been systematically defamed. So much so that any affiliation with JNU has become a disqualification for admission, appointment and invitation in several places. Such defamation can have other consequences as well. After having been defamed as “anti-national”, people like Umar Khalid became vulnerable to physical attacks. There are genuine nationalist fanatics in this country who can threaten your life since they have been told that you are an “anti-national”. So, when the ABVP and the organisations of its cohort do it, it goes beyond a particular event, a particular person. It sends a signal to all the institutions and its affiliates as well. It turns into a national malady. Looking for books and persons to defame becomes a national sport.

Similarly, issues, concerns or topics are turned illegitimate for teaching or research. We have seen books, chapters removed, dropped from the reading list, because either their authors were “illegitimate” or the subject matter they dealt with was “not right”.

If one scans the list of the topics approved for grants or fellowships by the ICSSR and ICHR, and those discarded, one will get a sense of the direction in which things are being pushed. Without an attack on scientific temper, how can the IITs and IIM be forced to do pseudo science?

Disruption comes after or with defamation and delegitimation. Seminars, film screenings, theatre performances are vandalised and disrupted. The ABVP seldom engages in arguments. The easy way out is to invoke pseudonationalism, religious insecurity or questions of caste, and pretend that feelings are hurt. They make a noise, physically attack and disrupt. Very economical!

A national spokesperson of the organisation, when asked that if they find a book problematic why cannot they respond by an essay if not a book, replied: “It takes time”. It does not take time to put a shouting book to a book, it takes only five months people to go on a rampage in a classroom or seminar. They know very well that academe-

Readers might feel that we are writing this article as we were targeted. We do not deny that. One must not accept abuse and humiliation. It should not become a norm. We should not think that since we were not physically harmed nor arrested, we should ignore this. That would be normalising a bully culture in universities. We need to tell the Sagar police that it not only failed in its constitutional duty, it violated it by working at the behest of a bully who was clearly in the wrong. Should we only pity the Sagar University administration and not tell them that safeguarding the freedom of a department was its duty and that it miserably failed? It went back on its word. That is not leadership.

icians are not trained in shouting, abusing, accusing or fist fighting.

Even a small disruption and abusive slogan-shouting is very effective. Because no department or centre wants its chairs, glass panes broken. What they do after one such incident is to disallow future events. This is how most colleges in Delhi University stopped having drama events or seminars after the ABVP attacked an event in Ramjas College or selected only convenient and “right” themes and people.

All you have to do is to give a wink and the message reaches where it should. Three years back, an editor and an MP reached the conference hall of the University of Delhi to release the journal published by the Students’ Union (DUSU), a first of its kind, only to find the hall locked. We were told that the ABVP did not want it to happen and the authorities had obliged.

Readers might feel that we are writing this article as we were targeted. We do not deny that. One must not accept abuse and humiliation. It should not become a norm. We should not think that since we were not physically harmed nor arrested, we should ignore this. That would be normalising a bully culture in universities.

We need to tell the Sagar police that it not only failed in its constitutional duty, it violated it by working at the behest of a bully who was clearly in the wrong. Should we only pity the Sagar University administration and not tell them that safeguarding the freedom of a department was its duty and that it miserably failed? It went back on its word. That is not leadership.

The Sagar University episode makes it clear that doublespeak has become the habit of the Indian government. While its policy document speaks for institutional autonomy, the ruling party’s student body and other affiliates and its law and order apparatus see to it that the institutions toe their ideological and organisational line and punish them if they deviate. It is for us to record all such violations and keep speaking as long as we still have our tongues intact.

Apoorvanand teaches at Delhi University and Raza is an Urdu poet

End of Kashmir’s exceptionalism

Abrogation of Article 370 ended this syndrome, which was exploited by forces within and without. A new generation of leaders must be helped to take over



RAM MADHAV

SEVERAL YEARS ago, when we were initiating dialogue with the PDP to explore the possibility of forming a coalition government in Jammu and Kashmir, I had the occasion to talk with a senior leader of that party. In response to my statement that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was keen on the progress and development of the state, the leader told me that every government in Delhi had talked about it and there was nothing new. Another leader argued that on all human development indices (HDI), J&K was doing better than other Indian states.

As a matter of fact, the state ranked 11th among Indian states in the HDI rankings in 2019, ahead of bigger states like Bihar, UP, MP and West Bengal. The reason was the favourable treatment it had received from the Centre all along. For a population of just 13 million, its budget outlay for 2021-22 is around Rs 1,10,000 crore, whereas the same for UP, which has 20 times the population is Rs 5,50,000 crore. While UP generates an internal revenue of almost 80 per cent of its outlay, J&K generates less than 20 per cent. UP fills its revenue gap through borrowings, while J&K fills it through central grants.

Indicating that development was never the issue, a Kashmiri leader stated at the recently-held Young Thinkers Meet that an average middle-class Kashmiri, unlike those elsewhere in India, owns a house with at least four bedrooms and a private garden with a dozen walnut and a couple of apple trees.

No wonder the mainstream Valley leadership was dismissive about development. So what drove politics in the state? What the leader I am referring to said subsequently provided the answer. There was an insistence on recognising that J&K’s merger with India in 1947, although it had other options as a Muslim-majority state, was a concession by its people and, hence, India should perpetually be grateful to them.

This had bred a sense of “Kashmiri exceptionalism” in the mainstream political establishment of the state for decades. Article 370 was seen as India’s grateful gesture, not for material development, but as a stamp of acknowledgement of that exceptionalism. Successive governments in Delhi chose to ignore this subterranean sentiment and continued to pamper the leadership.

This sense of exceptionalism and the syndrome of “Ladlapan” (of being pampered) dominated the state’s politics for seven decades. They were exploited by forces within and without to promote an entire infrastructure of separatism and terrorism in the Valley.

The nullification of Article 370 two years ago was intended to end this exceptionalism. While continuing to promote development for the benefit of ordinary people, the Union

government chose to give the utmost importance to establishing peace and democracy at the grassroots. On the development front, despite Covid, indicators like employment, investments and infrastructure development are showing promising prospects. The unemployment rate has fallen from 19 per cent last year to 10 per cent this year. Over 20,000 people, including women, have been provided loans by J&K Bank of up to Rs 10 lakh. The government plans to take it to 50,000 beneficiaries. The UT now has seven medical colleges and two cancer institutes. Two start-up incubation centres have come up at NIT, Srinagar and IIT, Jammu. On the Covid front, the administration has provided jobs to almost 60 per cent of the eligible population.

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha who has completed one year in office has brought dynamism and order in the functioning of the UT. His accessibility, extensive travel by road and focus on grassroots development and democracy have not only energised the administration, but also endeared him to the masses. He has ensured that the process to strengthen grassroots democratic institutions like village, block and district panchayats, which began a couple of years ago, is taken forward by delegating “fund, function and functionary” to those units.

There was a significant drop in the number of terror attacks immediately after the abrogation of Article 370. Although the number of attacks increased marginally last year, it is still lower than pre-August 2019 levels. The number of terrorists arrested has increased significantly, together with the busting of terrorist hideouts, unearthing of tunnels across the borders and diffusing of IEDs. The J&K police has come of age, calling for the reduction of dependence on other security forces. People seem to realise that the special constitutional status is not going to come back, and they do not seem too bothered about it. None of the leaders talked about the revocation of Article 370 at the meeting with the PM last month.

All this points to a significant improvement in the situation. Going forward, a couple of important challenges remain. There was a time in the Valley when people used to taunt each other saying “*Nabaz as manz chuy Pakistan*” — meaning, “Pakistan runs in your pulse”. This is no longer the case with the majority of the population. But there is palpable resentment in a section of the populace which feels it was deceived.

Attenuating this resentment before it is exploited by the “exceptionalists” is important. At the moment, this resentment is finding expression through the rejection of the UT status and the demand for restoration of full statehood. A new generation of leaders not seeped in the glib mindset of exceptionalism is championing these demands. Addressing them through early elections to the legislature and restoration of statehood at the appropriate time will strengthen this leadership. Placing J&K in the hands of this new leadership and reducing dependence on the central government and security forces is the logical aspiration after the annulment of Article 370.

The writer is member, board of governors, India Foundation



VAISHALI BANSAL

State of food insecurity

Problem has been sharpened by pandemic. Governments need to act urgently

INDIA WAS home to the largest number of undernourished people in the world even before the Covid-19 pandemic. The latest edition of the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) report, released jointly by five UN organisations in July, reveals that the pandemic and failure on the part of state to combat its effects, has led to a significant increase in the prevalence of hunger and food insecurity in the country.

According to the data presented in the report, the prevalence of moderate to severe food insecurity in India rose by about 6.8 percentage points in 2018-20. In absolute terms, the number of persons facing moderate to severe food insecurity has increased by about 9.7 crore since the outbreak of Covid. The irony is that this happened when the government had an unprecedented 100 million tonnes of food grains in its godowns — larger than the food stocks of any country. The country with the largest stock of grain in the world — 120 million tonnes as of July 1, 2021 — accounts for a quarter of the world’s food-insecure population. Estimates show that, in 2020, over 237 crore people were grappling with food insecurity globally, an increase of about 32 crore from 2019. South Asia alone accounts for 36 per cent of global food insecurity.

Estimates on food insecurity presented in the SOFI report are based on two globally-accepted indicators of food insecurity: The Prevalence of Undernourishment (PoU), which estimates the proportion of people suf-

fering from chronic deficiency of calories, and a more recently developed experience-based indicator called the Prevalence of Moderate and Severe Food Insecurity (PMSFI).

The PoU estimates are based on estimates of per-capita supply of food and distributional parameters estimated using the national consumption surveys. However, since data from consumption surveys are not available every year, these are updated only once in a few years. In the interim, PoU merely captures changes in the average per-capita food supply and is not sensitive enough to adequately capture recent disruptions such as those caused by the pandemic. Since the overall food supply has been somewhat resilient despite the pandemic and consumption surveys have not been conducted by most countries including India, the increase in prevalence of hunger captured by PoU — from 14 per cent in 2019 to 15.3 per cent in 2020 for India — is likely to be an underestimate.

On the other hand, PMSFI estimates are based on data collected through surveys that attempt to capture people’s experiences of food insecurity (such as eating less, modifying diet to eat cheaper food, skipping meals, and eating less than adequate food because of lack of money or other resources). FAO commissions Gallup to collect data on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES), based on which PMSFI is estimated. Unlike the national consumption surveys, the Gallup World Poll, an annual worldwide survey, was conducted in 2020-21 as well.

The PMSFI estimates presented in the report are particularly important because, since the outbreak of the pandemic, the Indian government has not undertaken any official assessment of food insecurity in the country. In this situation, based on a nationally-representative survey, the PMSFI estimates are the only national-level valid and reliable estimates available on the impact of the pandemic on food insecurity in India. The latest round of surveys, on which PMSFI estimates are based, were conducted from the beginning of the year 2020 up to early 2021, thus allowing for a thorough assessment of the impact of pandemic on people’s food security.

It may also be mentioned that not only has the government not conducted its own consumption or food security surveys, it does not approve the publication of results based on the Gallup World Poll. As a result, estimates for India are not published in the SOFI reports. However, these can still be obtained indirectly because the data are presented for South Asia and for “South Asia (excluding India)”. Estimates for India can be obtained by comparing the two sets of data.

PMSFI estimates thus derived show that there were about 43 crore of moderate to severe food-insecure people in India in 2019. As a result of the pandemic-related disruptions, this increased to 52 crore in one year. In terms of prevalence rates, moderate to severe food insecurity increased from about 31.6 per cent in 2019 to 38.4 per cent in 2021.

Despite being self-sufficient in the production of major food commodities, problems of hunger and food insecurity are grave in India because of widespread economic distress, high unemployment and high levels of inequality. A large proportion of the poor is dependent on the informal economy in which incomes are too low and uncertain. Unemployment rates have risen sharply over the last few years. High (and fluctuating) food prices, shrinking public investment and the economic slowdown have compounded the distress among working classes and the peasantry. With low and uncertain incomes, families dependent on the informal economy do not have assured access to adequate and nutritious food. These longstanding problems were aggravated last year because of lack of preparation to deal with the pandemic.

The sharp increase in food insecurity points to an urgent need for the government to establish systems for regular monitoring of the food security situation in the country and to universalise access to the public distribution system, at least during the pandemic. Everyone, irrespective of whether they have a ration card or not, should be allowed to take subsidised grain from ration shops. With almost 120 million tonnes of grain currently lying with the government, it requires almost no additional resources.

The writer is a research scholar at the Centre for Economic Studies and Planning, JNU

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

OMINOUS SPIKE

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, ‘A Covid warning’ (IE, Aug. 5). Alarming rise of the reproductive number (R-value) suggests that the second wave is not over yet and the third surge might strike sooner than later. A new challenge is being posed by the increase in the number of cases of vaccine breakthrough infection and reinfection. The states witnessing a surge need to conduct contact tracing on a war footing and create containment zones depending on the spread of infections. Fast-track emergency approvals by the Centre for all foreign-produced shots are needed to achieve the desired results.

SS Paul, Nadia

This refers to the editorial, ‘A Covid warning’ (IE, August 5). Since it is not prudent for an economy like India to extend lockdown and restrictions indefinitely, it is imperative to urgently bolster the inoculation measures. Options like ensuring subsidising manufacturing costs, placing bulk orders from producers, and inking bilateral vaccine supply deals should all be explored.

Anjali Bhavana, Thiruvananthapuram

WRONG PRIORITIES

THIS REFERS TO the article, ‘Wrong way to clean up’, (IE, August 5). The government’s subsidies for EV manufacturers is a case of misplaced priorities. Other objectives in India’s climate journey are of more relevance to facilitate India’s re-

IDEAS ONLINE

ONLY IN THE EXPRESS

● KARGIL OPERATION WAS PAKISTAN’S BIGGEST BLUNDER AFTER 1971 WAR: AZAD SINGH RATHORE

● GIRI IS NOT JUST AN ABODE OF LIONS: DHEERAJ MITTAL

www.indianexpress.com

duced dependency on fossil fuels, like investing in public transport.

Udit Sarkar, Kolkata

IDENTITY POLITICS

THIS REFERS TO the article, ‘The saviour complex’ (IE, August 5). The author has rightly called out the government for not listening to the Muslim women protesting at Shaheen Bagh. Gender identity has become a tool for political parties to gain votes. Such politics does help provide empowerment to vulnerable sections. But it also divides citizens. Secular issues that concern women — education, health, safety, security, employment, freedom of choice — seem to have taken a backseat

H Upadhyay via e-mail

EXPLAINED YOUR MONEY

Equity markets rising, where should you invest?



SANDEEP SINGH

AFTER HOVERING around the 51,000 and 52,000 marks for over three months, the Sensex at the Bombay Stock Exchange finally broke out of that zone this week. Over the last four trading sessions, it has climbed 1,906 points, or 3.6%, to close at a new high of 54,492.8 on Thursday. The Nifty at the National Stock Exchange, too, crossed the 16,000 mark for the first time on Tuesday and rose further to close at 16,294 on Thursday.

While markets are trading in uncharted territory amid concerns around inflation and a possible third Covid-19 wave, experts say the momentum in the markets may continue for now as it is well supported by liquidity, earnings growth and an uptick in economic activity and investor sentiment.

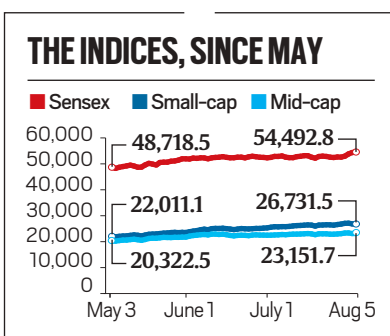
Why have equity markets gone up?

After the second Covid wave and concerns over its fallout on the economy kept market

sentiments under check over the last few months, a decline in cases over the last month, a pickup in vaccination pace and economic activity, and better than expected earnings growth by India Inc in the quarter ended June 2021 have now helped improve market sentiments. While high liquidity in the economy has supported this buoyancy in the market, recent data on GST collections crossing Rs 1.16 lakh crore and manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) moving back above the critical 50.0 threshold in July — up from 48.1 to 55.3 — point to a rebound in activity.

Another factor that has helped the markets rise has been the participation of foreign portfolio investors. In July, while they had invested a net of only Rs 4,600 crore into Indian equities, they had pulled out a net of Rs 11,300. However, between Wednesday and Thursday this week, they have invested a net of Rs 5,563 crore. While liquidity is strong, the continuing low interest rate environment, which is likely to stay for some time, is also helping the rise. The RBI's monetary policy statement on Friday will throw some light on this.

"Market is welcoming the sequential recovery of key high frequency indicators like manufacturing PMI, the GST collection and the Google mobility data; all are trending higher on a month-on-month basis. With the improvement in key macro data, FII turned buyers in the equity market v/s the net sellers



in the last month. Further, the recent spate of IPOs and their success clearly indicates the appetite for mid- and small-cap stocks," said Naveen Kulkarni, Chief Investment Officer, Axis Securities.

Is the momentum likely to continue?

There is a widespread belief among market participants that it will. While there is huge liquidity in the market, which is flowing both into the secondary market and even into the primary market (into the large number of IPOs that are hitting the market), there is optimism around a revival of earnings growth following a strong performance by India Inc in the quarter ended June. There is also a sense that since the government did not impose a complete shutdown following the second wave of

Covid, it is unlikely that there will be a shutdown if there is a third wave either. Thus, market participants believe that the economic activity will not be derailed. Some feel that since big lessons have been learnt from the second wave, India is much better prepared to handle a third wave (if there is one) mortality will be lower as many more people have been vaccinated now.

"The biggest strength for markets has been opening up of the economy and massive liquidity in the economy. While corporate earnings have been good, they are expected to recover over the next 12 months. Since the government did not shut the economy at the peak a second wave, market expects that even if the third wave comes, it is unlikely that there will be complete shutdown," said Raamdeo Agrawal, chairman and co-founder, Motilal Oswal Financial Services.

"I see the momentum continuing. While fundamentals of the economy remain strong, over the last few months the collections for banks and financial services companies have been closer to normal and that has given additional comfort to the markets," said Pankaj Pandey, head of research at ICICIdirect.com.

Is the broader market participating?

Over the last three months, mid- and small-caps rallied strongly while the Sensex lagged. However, the last four trading sessions

have seen dominance by the premier index, and large companies are now leading this rally. As against a Sensex rise of 3.6% over the last four trading sessions, the mid-cap index has risen by only 0.2% and the small-cap index has in fact slipped 0.2%. In the three months between May 1 and July 30, while the Sensex had risen by 7.8%, the mid- and small-cap indices had rallied 13.7% and 23.6% respectively (See graph).

On the sectoral front, while IT companies had been trading strong, companies in banking and financial services have done well over the last few days. Experts say that with NPAs not emerging as a big concern over the last few quarters, banks and financial services companies are expected to do well going forward.

While the Sensex has led the rally, market experts feel there are opportunities across market capitalisations and sectors.

Where should you invest?

When the market is down and even blue chips are available at attractive valuation, retail investors can invest in a fundamentally strong company and will see good returns over a period of time. However, when the markets are trading at all-time high levels and every company seems to be commanding a premium valuation, it is tough to identify the future winner even among the large-cap com-

panies. The risks are far higher in smaller companies. In fact, retail investors should put most of their equity investment through mutual funds that allocate money to large-, mid- and small-cap funds following the asset allocation principle.

"If one can't do the homework, then mutual fund is the best way to invest. However, if an investor can do some research, he can do direct investment too. The economy structurally looks positive and one can focus on simple known businesses with low leverage. While IT and chemicals and pharma look good structurally, investors can also look at some good companies in logistics and other growth sectors in the mid- and small-cap space for investment," said Pandey. He cautioned that investors should not borrow to invest in equity markets.

While there are a number of IPOs lined up to raise funds from the market, experts say investors must carefully study the company and its business, and do a peer review and valuation study before investing in them.

While markets are rising and a number of small-cap companies may hit the upper circuit, experts caution against chasing such companies. "One must be careful of tip-based investing, which gets prevalent in any bull market. Retail investors should only go with fundamentally strong companies," said the CEO of a financial services firm.

TOTAL RECALL

How Left opposed India-US nuclear deal, leading to split with UPA govt

Ex-Foreign Secretary's book says China used its links with Left to build opposition to the n-deal. A throwback to 2005-08

MANOJ CG

NEW DELHI, AUGUST 5

IN HIS new book *The Long Game: How the Chinese Negotiate with India* (Penguin Random House India), former Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale has written that China had used its "close connections" with Left parties in India to "build domestic opposition" to the Indo-US nuclear deal between 2007 and 2008. Gokhale was Joint Secretary (East Asia) during 2007-09, and was dealing with China in the Ministry of External Affairs.

The claims in his book have brought the spotlight back on the UPA-Left tussle and their bitter partition.

The support and the split

The four Left parties, keeping at bay their long-held ideological and political opposition to the Congress, had decided to extend support to the UPA government from outside in 2004 to stop the BJP from returning to power. But no one expected it to be a smooth relationship, and there were several irritants along the way.

It peaked in the wake of then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's landmark visit to the US in the summer of 2005. After wide-ranging discussions with President George W Bush, India and the US issued a joint statement aimed at cementing the bilateral relationship — the centrepiece of which was the decision to renew civil nuclear cooperation.

On July 21, the CPI(M) raised the first red flag against the civil nuclear deal. In the months and years that followed, the rift between the government and the Left kept widening.

The final act came in the summer of 2008 when the Left bloc withdrew its support to the UPA government, pushing it regime into a minority. The government, however, survived the no-confidence motion that followed.

CPM versus US

The CPM and the CPI, which once looked up to the Russian and Chinese Communist parties for inspiration and maintain warm relations with them, had long opposed closer strategic and military ties with the "imperialist" US. They raised red flags when the P V Narasimha Rao government signed an agreement on defence relations with the US. They opposed the A B Vajpayee government's efforts to forge closer military relations with the US including cooperation on missile defence. The CPM observed March 21, 2000 — the first day of the visit of then US President Bill Clinton — as a day of protest against US imperialism.

On July 1, 2005, the CPM Politburo said about the India-US defence deal: "the defence agreement comes at a time when the United States is actively working to prevent China from enhancing its defence potential. What is unstated in this agreement is the US aim of containment of China using India as a counter-weight."

Through 2005, the Left parties kept warning the government against deepen-



Left leaders at a rally against the nuclear deal and other issues in 2008, when they withdrew support to UPA. Express Archive

ing Indo-US ties. On July 31, two days after Prime Minister Singh made a statement in Parliament on his visit to the US, the CPM Politburo said "the joint statement issued after the Prime Minister's visit shows the continuation of the trend of India being accommodated as an ally of the US with decisions such as the joint democracy initiative and accepting the US leadership in the fight against terrorism."

In March 2006, the Left parties organised street protests when US President Bush visited India. The nuclear deal was signed during this visit.

The negotiations

The differences started to turn serious in mid-2006 when the CPM began accusing the US of shifting goalposts.

On July 23, it said proposed Bills drafted by the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and the House of Representatives Committee on International Relations contain provisions that are a clear departure from the understanding contained in the 2005 Singh-Bush agreement and the Separation Plan tabled in Parliament. The Left parties then demanded a discussion in Parliament.

In January 2007, the CPM said the legislation adopted by the US Congress (Hyde Act) to facilitate the nuclear deal has many objectionable clauses. It asked the government not to proceed without clearing all the extraneous terms and foreign policy implications. In July, even as the negotiations were about to conclude, the CPM again told the government that an agreement on civilian nuclear cooperation with the US can be based only on the assurances given by the Prime Minister in Parliament in August 2006, and by not accepting provisions contrary to India's interests.

The real crisis began in August 2007 after the text of the 'Agreement for Cooperation between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of India concerning peaceful uses of nuclear energy', popularly known as the 123 agreement, was released by both governments. On August 7, the Left parties asked the government not to proceed further with the operationalising of the agreement and sought a review of the strategic aspects in Parliament.

They said the various conditions inserted into the Hyde Act were unacceptable and that its provisions are far wider than the 123 agreement and could be used to terminate the 123 agreement not only in the eventuality of a nuclear test but also for India not conforming to US foreign policy.

On August 8, then CPM general secretary Prakash Karat declared that "the deal is through but the Congress will have to pay a political price for it". And on August 10, in an interview to *The Telegraph*, Prime Minister

Singh virtually dared the Left parties to withdraw support. "I told them that it is not possible to renegotiate the deal. It is an honourable deal, the Cabinet has approved it, we cannot go back on it. I told them to do whatever they want to do, if they want to withdraw support, so be it..." he said.

Days later, then CPI general secretary the late A B Bardhan declared that the "honeymoon" between UPA and Left was over and withdrawal of support to the central government appeared "inevitable". Karat, however, nuanced it to say "the honeymoon may be over but the marriage can go on".

On August 18, the CPM Politburo declared that until all the objections are considered and the implications of the Hyde Act evaluated, the government should not take the next step with regard to negotiating a safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Both sides, however, agreed to give talks one last chance to prevent the fall of the government and early elections. In September 2007, a UPA-Left Committee on Indo-US civil nuclear cooperation was set up. A series of negotiations and political sniping followed, even as the government held negotiations with the IAEA for an India-specific safeguards agreement.

In November, at the sixth meeting of the UPA-Left Committee, it was decided that talks would be held with the IAEA secretariat for working out the text of the safeguards agreement, and the outcome of the negotiations would be placed before the Committee before proceeding further.

The Left parties said that while some of the features of the text were discussed in the Committee's seventh and eighth meetings in March and May 2008, the text was not made available. And on June 18, the Left parties told the government not to proceed to seek approval of the text of the India-specific safeguards agreement from the IAEA Board of Governors. In the absence of the text, they said they had not been able to form any opinion.

Then External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee met Karat several times asking him to allow the government to go to the IAEA to seek approval of the text. The Left leaders argued that once the safeguards agreement was completed, the nuclear deal would be on auto pilot.

The withdrawal

On July 7, Prime Minister Singh en route to Japan to attend the G8 summit told reporters that India would "very soon" approach the IAEA for a safeguards agreement. He said the Government was not afraid of facing Parliament if the Left parties withdrew support.

On July 8, the Left decided to withdraw support, and made this public on July 9.

Years later, very little progress on n-deal projects

ANIL SASI

NEW DELHI, AUGUST 5

OTHER THAN the imported Russian-built reactor-based project in Tamil Nadu, which is grandfathered under an earlier 1998 agreement, progress of greenfield projects since the Indo-US nuclear deal has been tardy.

While the US has been discussing the sale of nuclear reactors to India since the 2008 pact, two subsequent agreements were signed only in 2016 and 2019. A "project proposal" to set up six reactors in collaboration with Westinghouse Electric Company (WEC) has been announced, but work is yet to begin.

The project in Kovvada in coastal Andhra Pradesh, about 260 km from Visakhapatnam, will comprise six AP-1000 reactor units of 1208 MWe (mega watt electric) capacity each. The cost and schedule will emerge after the proposal is finalised, and receives the government's administrative approval and financial sanction. In May 2017, the Union Cabinet gave it "in-principle" approval. WEC's AP-1000s are Light Water Reactors, like the ones being set up in collaboration with Russia in Tamil Nadu's Kudankulam, where water is used both as coolant and moderator. WEC, alongside Wilmington-based GE Hitachi Nuclear, has been negotiating to build reactors in India since the nuclear deal was inked. The project, however, came under a cloud after WEC filed for bankruptcy in mid-2017 following cost overruns on reactors coming up in the US. The GE Hitachi project has barely made any progress.

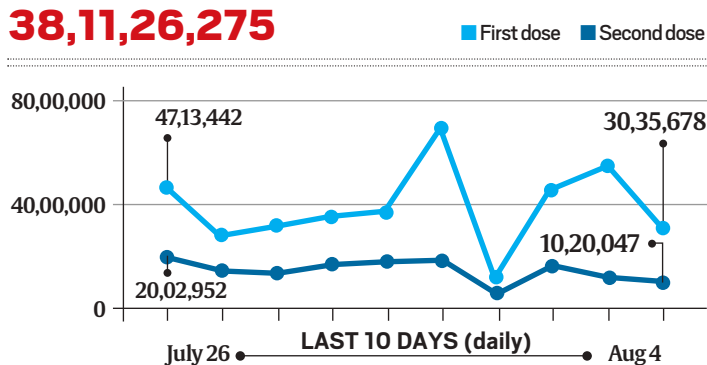
Another major project involved the French state-owned operator Areva, which was subsequently taken over by the French electricity utility EDF, also controlled by the state. EDF is learnt to have submitted to NPCIL on April 22 this year a "binding techno-commercial offer to supply engineering studies and equipment" for the construction of six EPR reactors in Jaitapur, Maharashtra. This will effectively enable discussions aimed at a binding framework agreement in the coming months, building on a pact signed in March 2018 by the two governments, and the submission of EDF's non-binding proposal at the end of 2018.

Besides these project proposals under the pacts with the US, France and Russia, India has signed Inter Governmental Agreements for co-operation in peaceful use of nuclear energy with 14 other countries: Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Czech Republic, European Union, Japan, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Namibia, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, UK and Vietnam.

CORONAVIRUS DASHBOARD

TOTAL VACCINATED IN INDIA (at least one dose)

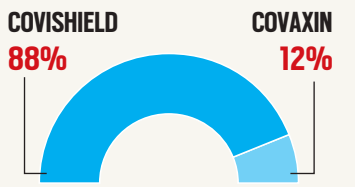
38,11,26,275



TOTAL DOSES

48,93,42,295

(Sputnik V's 5,23,280 doses not represented in pie)



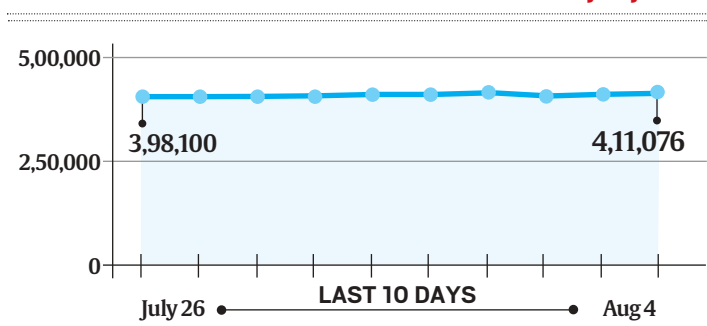
DOSES ON AUG 04

40,55,725

AUG 03: 67,42,456 (54,63,671 st doses; 12,78,785 2nd)

INDIA ACTIVE CASES

4,11,076



Note: The August 4 figures in these graphs are based on the government updates on August 5

INDIA TOTAL CASES

3,18,12,114

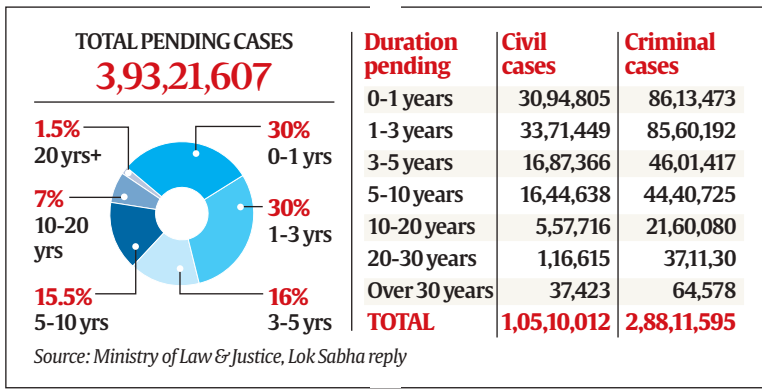
Source: Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, updated at 11 pm on August 5

TELLING NUMBERS

Pending cases in lower, subordinate courts

NEARLY 4 crore cases — over 1 crore civil and nearly 3 crore criminal — are pending in lower and subordinate courts across the country as of July 30 this year. This

emerges from figures tabled in Parliament by Law and Justice Minister Kiren Rijju on Thursday, in response to a question by BJD MP Anubhav Mohanty,



9 IN PARLIAMENT

MONSOON SESSION

5 QUESTIONS



TMC RAJYA SABHA MP SUKHENDU SEKHAR RAY TELLS ESHA ROY WHY HE RAISED A POINT OF ORDER CITING ARTICLE 105(1) WHEN DEPUTY CHAIRMAN HARIVANSH ASKED OPPOSITION MPs TO STICK TO DISCUSSING THE THREE BILLS TABLED INSTEAD OF RAISING OTHER ISSUES:

What is Article 105(1)?

Article 105 says there shall be freedom of speech in Parliament, subject to the Constitution and rules of the House. There is no other provision in the Constitution that contradicts this provision...

Why did you raise this point of order?

It was becoming clear to us that freedom of speech of Opposition members is being infringed upon in the House...

Besides protests in Parliament, has Opposition tried raising these issues any other way?

I have filed notices under 267 from the first day of session. Other MPs have also filed...but not once has it been taken up.

Has there been any precedent to such notices under rule 267 being taken up?

In both UPA regimes, many discussions took place. Even under Narendra Modi government, this rule has been invoked thrice...

The government says Opposition is not allowing Parliament to work.

In 2010, entire winter session was washed out due to the ruckus created by BJP.

3 Bills cleared in RS, 2 introduced in LS amid din; Opp asks govt why rush through

Upper House sees heated debate over defence services Bill

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 5

THREE BILLS were passed in Rajya on Thursday amid protests by Opposition members over Pegasus spyware, the farm laws and alleged rape and murder of a minor Dalit girl.

The Constitution (Schedule Tribes) Order Amendment Bill 2021 introduced by Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda, The Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas Bill, 2021 by Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav and the Essential Defence Services Bill, 2021 moved by MoS Defence Ajay Bhatt were passed even as the Upper House saw repeated adjournments.

The Essential Defence Services Bill, introduced by Bhatt in the presence of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, sparked heated debate, with Opposition members questioning why it had been tabled in such a rushed manner.

The Bill is aimed at preventing staff of government-owned ordnance factories from going on strike. The government has said the Bill will ensure uninterrupted supply of ordnance items to armed forces for national security.

Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge said the government has been breaking "many precedents" and the Bill had been rushed in Parliament, whereas it



Rajnath Singh in Rajya Sabha on Thursday. *PTI*

should have been referred to a standing committee because it involved de-nationalisation of ordnance factories.

BJD MP Sujeet Kumar, YSRCP MP Ayodhya Rami and AIADMK MP M Thambidurai supported the Bill saying it was important for national security, while DMK MP M Shanmugam asked why such a Bill "has been brought".

The debate became heated after several Opposition members said they were not being allowed to discuss issues in detail in Parliament. When TMC MP Sukhendu Shekhar Ray raised a point of order on Article 105 sub article 1, Deputy Chairman Harivansh said that Rule 110 says that discussion in Parliament should be limited to the Bill being tabled.

"If the aim of the Bill is to ensure national security, why are people being snooped on and why is Pegasus being used to en-

ter people's bedrooms?" said NCP MP Fauzia Khan. Binoy Viswam of CPI said, "How can workers be against national security? What right does the government have to stop their right to strike? And what about Pegasus?"

Defence Minister Singh said, "Corporatising of army ordnance factories was thought of to improve autonomy as well as services. I want to assure the members that the Bill will in no way affect the service conditions of the ordnance employees... We have spoken to employees' unions before bringing the Bill and it will only be applicable when it is invoked."

Sources in the defence ministry said that corporatisation of OFB will not impact autonomy of ordnance factories. The Bill "does not curb the right of peaceful protest", sources said.

FULL REPORT ON
www.indianexpress.com

Opp lacks intent to debate: govt; Badal says LSTV used for 'politics'

LIZ MATHEW & DEEPTIMAN TIWARY
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 5

THERE WAS no sign of let up as trading of charges continued between the treasury and Opposition in the Lok Sabha with the introduction of two Bills amid the din and repeated adjournments.

While the government alleged that the Opposition did not have any intention to debate any issue but a "mindset to create disorder", the Opposition maintained that they wanted a discussion on the Pegasus issue and intensified efforts to put up a fiercer offence.

The Opposition MPs were also agitated over their protests not shown or heard on the Lok Sabha TV and had earlier complained to Speaker Om Birla. On Thursday, the television screens placed inside the House were showing the protesting MPs and their placards but the MPs later realised that the telecast version had blocked their protests.

The treasury benches, on the other hand, have taken strong offence to the Opposition MPs trying to hold placards against the Chair.

"This government is trying to trample over every democratic right. Not only that, they are not allowing us to raise the issues by not admitting the adjournment motions we are giving repeatedly. Even the Lok Sabha TV is used for a political purpose only to show the ruling party and not to show



Harsimrat Kaur Badal

the Opposition protesting," said SAD leader Harsimrat Kaur Badal, who has been protesting over the contentious farm Bills in the Lok Sabha. "Today they even went to the extent of playing a trick on the MPs where TV screens inside the House showed our protests but what the public sees did not show it... clearly shows that the government is on the backfoot..."

The question hour ran for 30 minutes but the slogan-shouting by the MPs in the well of the House forced Speaker Om Birla to adjourn the proceedings. "People want you to raise questions... they are asking why our money is wasted like this," the Speaker said.

The House functioned barely for five minutes after it was reconvened at 2 pm. Amid the din, Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan introduced a Bill to amend the Central Universities Act, which aims to establish a Central university in Ladakh.

However, Congress leader Manish Tewari said there was a time-honoured convention of the Parliament that until the House is

in order, a legislation cannot be discussed. RSP's N K Premchandran too opposed the introduction of the Bill. The House was adjourned immediately after the Bill was introduced.

When the House met at 5 pm, the Taxation Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2021, was introduced by a voice vote amid similar objections by the Opposition.

As the Opposition disrupted proceedings, Union Minister Piyush Goyal said the Pegasus issue had come up in the past too. "This issue has come up in 2019 and now again... The IT Minister has given a statement in Parliament and the members could ask for clarification... However, they have no intention to discuss the issue so they did not even ask. Their mindset is to create disorder," he said.

Meanwhile, at a press conference at the BJP Headquarters, senior party leader Ravi Shankar Prasad hit out at the Congress. "It is worth noting that when in power, UPA passed dozens of Bills either without debate or with pandemonium in the din. This includes the Competition (Amendment) Bill, 2007, Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Amendment Bill, 2007, All India Institute of Medical Sciences and the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (Amendment) Act, 2007 and more."

Kharge went on to talk about his telephone call with Singh and said the minister had assured him of a meeting to end the impasse in Parliament after his return from Tajikistan. "But it has been days since his return, and there has been no meeting called," said Kharge. "Instead the government is putting the Opposition on the back."



Mallikarjun Kharge

PTI

Kharge, Rajnath spar over stalemate

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 5

THE WAR of words over disruption in Parliament proceedings intensified on Thursday, with Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge accusing Defence Minister Rajnath Singh of not resolving the stalemate as he had promised during a telephonic conversation. Singh responded that he had never given such assurances.

"Since Mallikarjun Kharge has mentioned me, I would like to make it clear that I had not made any such assurances (to him). Yes, I talked to him on the phone. I had appealed to him to end this deadlock," Singh said.

Rising to discuss the Essential Defence Services Bill, 2021, Kharge said in Rajya Sabha, "Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has brought it in the additional agenda because he and the government think they can use the hungama in the House to somehow pass these Bills..."

Kharge went on to talk about his telephone call with Singh and said the minister had assured him of a meeting to end the impasse in Parliament after his return from Tajikistan. "But it has been days since his return, and there has been no meeting called," said Kharge. "Instead the government is putting the Opposition on the back."

Rajya Sabha passes Bill for commission for air quality management in NCR

ESHA ROY
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 5

PARLIAMENT ON Thursday approved a Bill that seeks to set up a commission for air quality management in the National Capital Region and its adjoining areas.

The Commission for Air Quality Management in National Cap-

ital Region and Adjoining Areas Bill, 2021 — introduced by Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav — was passed in Rajya Sabha with a voice vote as Opposition continued to protest. The Bill was passed by Lok Sabha on Wednesday.

Several MPs raised concerns over the clause on collection of environmental compensation, including those who have sup-

ported the Bill. Others pointed out that the commission should look at air pollution in other parts of the country as well.

Responding, minister Yadav said, "Members have raised concern on Clause 15. I would like to point out that Clause 14 says this will not apply to farmers for stubble burning. We have decriminalised this Bill completely."

OBC list: In House next week, Bill to restore states' powers

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 5

THE GOVERNMENT will bring a Bill to Parliament next week to clarify "some provisions in the 102nd Constitutional amendment Bill" to restore the power of the states to identify backward classes — a demand made by a number of regional parties and even the ruling party's own OBC

leaders.

The Constitutional 127th Amendment Bill will amend Articles 342 A — clauses 1 and 2 — and will introduce clause 342 A (3) specifically authorising states to maintain their State List. There will be a consequential amendment in Articles 366(26C) and 338B(9). States will then be able to directly notify OBC and SEBCs without having to refer to the NCBC.

"There has been some confusion about what comprises a state and Central list, and this clause will clarify that," said ministry sources.

"The cabinet has cleared the amendments and a Bill will be brought to Parliament next week. This is to give clarity to the 102nd constitutional amendment," said a Union minister.

Asked if the government is optimistic about getting the Bill, a

constitutional amendment, passed in Parliament amid the ruckus, the minister said, "We will be doing it in the proper way. All the formalities will be fulfilled."

A constitutional amendment Bill must be passed in each House by a majority of the total membership of that House and by a majority of not less than two-thirds of the members of that House present and voting.

The Centre had earlier moved

a review petition in the Supreme Court challenging the court's interpretation of the 102nd amendment of the Constitution in the Maratha reservation judgment that had scrapped the power of the states to identify and notify socially and educationally backward classes.

The move is politically significant as the BJP is banking heavily on OBC votes in key states that go to polls next year.



DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



RARE MOVE

WHILE CONGRESS leader Rahul Gandhi met the family of the 9-year-old Dalit rape victim Wednesday, his party wanted Parliament to pass a resolution condemning the crime. In a rare move, leader of the Congress in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury wrote to Speaker Om Birla on Thursday proposing that a resolution be passed in the House on the incident. He said it was a matter of deep shock and anguish. He wanted the House to express a deep sense of concern over the incident, condemn it and pledge to provide succour to the family.

DIVERSE GREETINGS

AT THE beginning of the day in Lok Sabha, members greet the Speaker when he/she enters. While the greetings in various languages used to sound quite diverse, they are increasingly reflecting the widening gap between different groupings inside the House. While Namaskaram and Vanakkam used to be the usual greetings earlier, they later became Jai Telangana, Jai Maharashtra and Jai Bangla. Some MPs would say Sat Sri Akal, Har Har Mahadev and As-Salaam-Alaikum. Ever since Jai Shri Ram chants took on a political tenor, some BJP MPs would use it emphatically. But TMC's Mahua Moitra is responding to them with "Hail Mary".

QUICK POINT

MANY MPs in Rajya Sabha, when given a chance to discuss one of the three Bills tabled on Thursday, used the platform to raise three issues — Pegasus, farm laws and alleged rape of a Dalit girl in Delhi. Like her colleagues in the Opposition, Shiv Sena MP Priyanka Chaturvedi attempted to do the same, but with the commotion in the house, could barely get herself heard. A colleague sitting nearby urged her to "go to the point". A frustrated Chaturvedi said she was trying to, and then exclaimed "Arey yaar!" She finally raised the issue of the Dalit girl, and quickly sat back down.

SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF AUG 5, 2019 MOVES

PAGD says J&K situation worsening by the day

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, AUGUST 5

MEMBERS OF the People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) Thursday met at its chairman Farooq Abdullah's residence on the second anniversary of the revocation of Jammu and Kashmir's special status and expressed concern that the situation on the ground was "worsening" by the day.

PAGD spokesperson and CPI(M) leader MY Tarigami said the Centre's claim of having restored peace in the region was inaccurate. "The situation since August 5, 2019 is worsening day by day... They have said on the floor of the Parliament that statehood will be restored at an appropriate time when there is normalcy. That means that the situation continues to be abnormal," Tarigami said after the meeting.

He said the recent all-party meet chaired by PM Narendra Modi had triggered hope but nothing concrete was done to re-



Mufti in a PDP protest in Srinagar on Thursday. *Shuaib Masoodi*

store the people's confidence.

The PAGD spokesperson also dismissed claims of development and investment in J&K, stating that chambers of commerce and industry in Kashmir, Jammu and even Leh "will state the contrary".

Abdullah, who is also the National Conference president, Thursday told his party workers that the August 5 decisions were a "lethal assault on the country's secular visage, its pluralistic and

asymmetrical federalism and violation of sovereign promises made by the country to the people of J&K and Ladakh."

Tarigami said J&K has been in lockdown since August 2019 and the "hardline approach of arrests and detentions" has not receded in the last two years. "The clampdown and continuous restrictions on the movement and association of the people and gagging the media has resulted in a forced silence."

Hurriyat says Kashmir issue now complicated further, points at LAC

BASHAARAT MASOOD
SRINAGAR, AUGUST 5

HURRIYAT CONFERENCE on Thursday called for political engagement and dialogue with Pakistan to resolve the Kashmir issue, saying "intransigence and denial" is not helping anyone.

In a statement issued on the second anniversary of the abrogation of Article 370, the separatist conglomerate said the scrapping of special status to J&K and bifurcation of the state into Union Territories has only complicated the dispute and brought China into the picture.

"The present Indian government's actions of August 5, 2019 has only complicated the dispute... it ignited the flames along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) even as some measure of calm has been introduced along the Line of Control," Hurriyat said, referring to the India-China tension in eastern Ladakh.

"Hurriyat is convinced that the Government of India must accept the need to address the



Separatist amalgam sought release of political prisoners, including Mirwaiz (above)

Kashmir dispute, engage with those who truly represent the political will and aspirations of its peoples, and defuse the building geopolitical pressures in the region along its northern and western borders," the statement said. "Hurriyat urges the Government of India to resume engagement with the Government of Pakistan."

"Hurriyat has had a long-standing policy of engagement in meaningful dialogue among all the stakeholders that sees the situation on the ground for what it is, and encourages dialogue rather than armed confrontation."

Will share our perspectives on Afghanistan at UNSC meet: India

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 5

INDIA WILL share its vision and perspectives on Afghanistan at a meeting of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) on August 6, the Ministry of External Affairs said on Thursday.

This came on a day External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar attended the swearing-in ceremony of newly elected Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi in Tehran. During his

stay, Jaishankar will meet Raisi and also hold talks with other leaders.

Both New Delhi and Tehran have similar concerns on Taliban violence in Afghanistan and the deteriorating security situation there. Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani was also in Tehran to attend Raisi's swearing-in ceremony.

In its capacity as UNSC President for August, India decided on Thursday to hold a session on the situation in Afghanistan, two days after Afghanistan Foreign Minister Mohammad Haneef



Jaishankar had met Ebrahim Raisi in Tehran last month.

Atmar called Jaishankar to "discuss convening an emergency session of the UNSC".

Responding to questions during an online media briefing, MEA's official spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said: "As regards the UN Security Council, the issue of Afghanistan will be deliberated tomorrow. During tomorrow's debate, we will share our vision and perspectives on Afghanistan, and we look forward to productive deliberations on this important issue."

On the issue of Afghanistan, he said, "Our close relationship with Afghanistan... Our relations are broad based, and cover various aspects, including a strong development partnership. We are also strategic partners, and are guided by Strategic Partnership Agreement signed in 2011."

Earlier this week, Atmar had said that United Nations and the international community must play a greater role to stop the unfolding tragedy in Afghanistan due to Taliban violence and atrocities.

10 EXPRESS NETWORK

BRIEFLY

EPFO: Sept 1 deadline to link UAN-Aadhaar

New Delhi: With Section 142 of Social Security Code, 2020, notified in May this year, making it mandatory to link Aadhaar with the Provident Fund account or Universal Account Number (UAN), the deadline for seeding Aadhaar with the EPFO account is September 1, 2021. Employers would be able to file monthly online returns (ECR) and make payment of EPF and pension contributions of "only those members whose Aadhaar numbers are seeded with UAN and verified", according to a release from the regional PF commissioner's office in Mumbai. After September 1, "employers will not be able to remit monthly PF and allied dues in respect of their employees whose Aadhaar numbers are not seeded with UAN and they (employer) will be liable for any legal/statutory/membership/service delivery aspects affecting such employees of theirs", it mentioned. **ENS**

CHHATTISGARH

1 dead, 11 hurt as Maoists blow up civilian car

Raipur: One person died and 11 others suffered injuries in an IED blast in Chhattisgarh's Dantewada on Thursday. The IEDs were planted by Maoists, police said, and they targeted the vehicle believing it to be a police car. All of them were contractual labourers who were going to work, police said. "At around 7.30 am on Thursday, the SUV was coming from Narayanpur, when at Ghotia on the Bodali-Malewahi road an IED blasted under the vehicle. It was a command IED as we found wires from the spot," Dantewada SP Abhishek Pallav said. **ENS**

TAMIL NADU

7.5% quota for govt students in exec courses

Chennai: Tamil Nadu has issued an order introducing 7.5% horizontal reservation for students from government schools in admissions to engineering, agriculture, veterinary and fisheries courses from the coming academic year. Last November, a similar quota was introduced by the previous AIADMK government in medical admissions. According to a order, the decision to extend the quota for many more courses was followed by recommendations from the Justice Murugesan commission that studied the reasons for low admission rates of the government school students in many professional courses. The commission found that there was hardly 3% of government school students who get admitted in professional colleges. **ENS**

Kishor resigns as Punjab CM's Principal Advisor, buzz on formal entry into Cong

KANCHAN VASDEV
CHANDIGARH, AUGUST 5

AMID TALK of his joining the Congress and the party leadership seriously discussing a blueprint prepared by him for its revival, political strategist Prashant Kishor on Thursday resigned as Principal Advisor to Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh.

His move, many leaders in the Congress believe, is the precursor to his formal joining of the party. Interestingly, the party leadership (read the Gandhis) have reportedly not yet discussed his possible entry with many top leaders.

His resignation comes days after Amarinder bowed to the high command and grudgingly accepted the appointment of



Strategist Prashant Kishor

Navjot Singh Sidhu as PCC president.

Kishor was appointed Principal Advisor by Amarinder in March. He was expected to design Amarinder's campaign for the next Assembly election.

Sources said Kishor sent his resignation to the CM stating, "As you are aware, in view of my decision to take a temporary break from active role in public life, I have not been able to take over the responsibilities as your Principal Advisor. Since I am yet to decide on my future course of action, I write to request you to

kindly relieve me from this responsibility."

The CMO has not confirmed receiving the resignation. The development was, however, awaited ever since Kishor said he would hang his boots from strategising after the West Bengal elections. After that he had not visited Punjab, though he had met Amarinder in Delhi recently.

Kishor had designed Amarinder's strategy ahead of 2017 Assembly polls. After he designed the Congress campaign centred around Amarinder, the party won a handsome majority with 77 seats in an Assembly of 117 members.

Appointing him as Principal Advisor, Amarinder had tweeted: "Happy to share that @Prashant Kishor has joined me as my Principal Advisor. Look forward to working together for the bet-

terment of the people of Punjab!"

He was appointed at Cabinet minister rank and was working pro bono. He was paid Re 1 a month as token honorarium and was entitled to perks like a government residence and half a dozen staff members. He was allotted an office in the Punjab secretariat but he never attended that office.

Kishor's appointment was seen as Amarinder's message that he (CM) would be leading the party's campaign ahead of the Assembly polls. But with Sidhu's appointment, the scenario has changed. Kishor's quitting will be seen as a setback to Amarinder's camp, especially when Kishor has been meeting the Congress top leadership, stirring up speculation that he may be working with the Congress at the national level.

TRACKING THE SECOND SURGE

522
DAYS SINCE
PANDEMIC
BEGAN

NEW CASES: 43,627

ACTIVE CASES: 4,14,440

TOTAL VACCINATION: 48,93,42,295

DAILY DEATHS
468

TOTAL DEATHS
4,26,758

WEEKLY CFR
1.33%

OVERALL CFR
1.36%



TESTS TODAY: 20,73,390 | TOTAL TESTS: 47,69,66,753

WEEKLY POSITIVITY: 2.30% | OVERALL POSITIVITY: 6.68%

STATES REPORTING MOST CASES

STATE	NEW CASES	ACTIVE CASES	WEEKLY POSITIVITY	TOTAL VACCINATION
■ Kerala	22,040	1,78,362	12.24%	21,114,476
■ Maharashtra	9,026	74,995	3.29%	45,474,924
■ Andhra	2,145	20,302	2.60%	22,650,559
■ Tamil Nadu	1,997	20,138	1.27%	24,202,926
■ Karnataka	1,785	24,439	1.20%	31,958,469

STATES REPORTING MOST DEATHS

STATE	TODAY'S DEATHS	TOTAL DEATHS	WEEKLY CFR	OVERALL CFR
■ Maharashtra	123	1,36,947	2.22%	2.19%
■ Kerala	117	17,407	0.74%	0.54%
■ Odisha	68	6,289	2.88%	0.65%
■ Tamil Nadu	33	34,230	1.45%	1.35%
■ Karnataka	25	36,705	1.87%	1.27%

Note: Data as on Aug 5; vaccination numbers as of Aug 4. Deaths include those from previous days.

Pegasus is a tool to silence people: Rahul

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 5

TARGETING PRIME Minister Narendra Modi over the Pegasus snooping row, senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Thursday said the Israeli spyware is a tool to silence people.

Addressing a 'Sansad Gherao' protest organised by the Indian Youth Congress, he said, "Your mobile phone is your voice. Narendra Modi has put the idea of Pegasus in the mobile phone of every youth, not just mine. This idea is that if you speak the truth, Narendra Modi and Pegasus are there in your phones," he said. "Pegasus is a way to silence the voice of people." He said the day the youth start speaking the truth, the BJP government will crumble.

He also targeted the government on the issue of employment and job losses.

PM draws Aug 5 link: Art 370, Ram Temple, hockey medal

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, AUGUST 5

HOURS AFTER the Indian men's hockey team won their first Olympic medal in 40 years, Prime Minister Narendra Modi referred to the victory to target opposition parties, saying while the country's youths were scoring goals on field, some with selfish political interests were scoring "self-goals" and disrespecting Parliament.

Addressing beneficiaries of Pradhan Mantri Gareeb Kalyan Anna Yojna (PM-GKAY) from Uttar Pradesh through video conferencing, the Prime Minister also termed August 5 as a date of achievements – abrogation of Article 370 in 2019, laying of foundation stone for Ram Temple in Ayodhya in 2020 and Thursday's Olympic medal in hockey.

"It was August 5 when two years ago the country strengthened the feeling of One India-

Former MLA's grandson held, niece suspected to have joined IS

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU, AUGUST 5

FOLLOWING NIA raids, the grandson of the late Congress MLA BM Idrinabba was arrested from Ullal in Mangaluru on Wednesday. Ammar Abdul Rahman, 35, was picked up in connection with the case of a Kerala module of the Islamic State registered in March this year.

Rahman's niece is believed to have been among the 13 residents of Kasaragod, Kerala, who left the country to join the IS in 2016. In a chargesheet filed in January 2017, the NIA hinted that Ajmala and her husband Shifas K P left India via Bengaluru on May 24, 2016, and joined IS in the Nangarhar province of Afghanistan. Sources said Ajmala is believed to have been killed sometime in 2018. A total of 21 people left Kerala around the time to join the IS.

Idinabba died in 2009. Apart from Rahman, the NIA arrested Bengaluru resident Madesha P alias Ali Muaviya (22) and Kashmir's Obaid Hamid and Muzammil Hassan Bhat Wednesday. The NIA is reportedly also investigating Rahman's 33-year-old wife and mother of three.

They are alleged to have links with "IS sympathiser" Mohammed Ameen Yahya. A resident of Mallapuram, Kerala,

Yahya was arrested on March 15, and is accused by the NIA of running IS propaganda channels on social media platforms such as Telegram, Hoop and Instagram, and of "propagating the violent jihadi ideology of ISIS and radicalizing and recruiting new members". The NIA said at the time that the module had been "successful in expanding the network in Kashmir and parts of Kerala and Karnataka".

Following Yahya's arrest, the NIA had held Muhab Anwar from Kollam and Dr Rahees Rashid, a dentist, from Kochi, as part of the probe into the IS Kerala module.

In the chargesheet filed in the 2016 Kasaragod case, the NIA had said after leaving India, the accused were "continuing their anti-national activities by propagating the ideology of and inviting support for ISIS, through various means including, but not limited to, internet-based social media platforms".

Rahman's arrest incidentally coincides with a plea filed in the Supreme Court by the father of one of those who went missing with Ajmala in 2016, Ayesha alias Sonia Sebastian. Sebastian Francis has sought extradition of his daughter and seven-year-old granddaughter from a prison in Afghanistan, where they are believed to be lodged, fearing their fate with the Taliban advancing in the country.



NIA searches at the residence of BM Basha, Wednesday. File

that they are scoring self-goals."

"These people have no interest in what the country wants, what he country is achieving and how the country is changing. They are wasting time and hurting feelings of the country. They are continuously disrespecting Parliament... The country is involved in fighting a massive pandemic, but they are competing to find ways to stop public welfare work," he said, targeting the Opposition for disrupting Parliament over the Pegasus issue. The country will not be held hostage by such selfish politics, Modi said, adding that some are trying to stop Parliament, but the people will not let them do that.

He said the country is progressing rapidly on every front, as he listed India's performance at the Olympics, the recently achieved 50-crore Covid vaccination mark, GST collection figures, agricultural exports and the launch of trials of indigenously built aircraft carrier Vikrant.

NEWSCLICK CASE

Why do you need custodial interrogation, HC asks cops

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 5

THE DELHI High Court Thursday continued till December 17 its order granting interim protection from arrest to NewsClick Editor-in-Chief Prabir Purkayastha and Editor Pranjal in the foreign finding case registered by Delhi Police's Economic Offences Wing.

It questioned the investigating agency's opposition to pre-arrest bail for the news portal's editors in light of a finding given by Reserve Bank of India in their favour.

The August 2020 FIR against NewsClick under IPC Sections 406, 420 and 120B alleges that the company received FDI to the tune of Rs 9.59 crore from Worldwide Media Holdings LLC, US, during 2018-19. This, it says, "was made by greatly overvaluing the shares of the company to avoid the alleged cap of 26% of FDI in a digital news website".

Hearing the petitions seeking anticipatory bail, the EOW Thursday told the court that letter interrogatories were being issued to the firms concerned abroad. "Investigation is the prerogative of the investigating officer. He would like to carry on the investigation the way he likes. We have fairly stated that they have joined the investigation. Whatever the answer comes from further people who are being investigated, so they will be required to join the investigation," it submitted.

Justice Yogesh Khanna in the order directed the EOW to complete the exercise before December 17. Asking the investigating agency why it needed the custodial interrogation, the court observed: "Institutions ka reply ka aap kya karenge? (What will you do with institutions' reply?) Even if there may be 100 institutions, the question is... you know the RBI response that there is no delay..."

The court in the order recorded a statement made by the EOW in its status report that a "reply from RBI has been received where in it is mentioned that as per the Form FCGPR submitted, the foreign inward remittance, was under automatic route and there was no delay in issue of shares as well as reporting, as per the extant FEMA regulations in case of M/s PPK New Click Studio Pvt. Limited".

ANDHRA PRADESH

Flood alert after crest gate at dam washed away

Hyderabad: A flood alert has been issued for downstream areas and at Prakasam Barrage in Vijayawada after a crest gate at Pulichintala Irrigation Project in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh was washed away Thursday.

Engineers were trying to raise two hydraulic-operated gates to let off the heavy inflow of water that the dam received overnight. The gate got stuck and the force of the water blew it away.

Krishna District Collector J Nivas and Guntur District Collector Vivek Yadav issued flood alerts to villages along the river as officials raised gates to reduce pressure on the dam, and start work on erecting an emergency gate. **ENS**

Local boys bag bronze, joy for 2 Jalandhar villages

ANJU AGNIHOTRI CHABA
JALANDHAR, AUGUST 5

ANXIOUS MOMENTS spent glued to the television gave way to ecstatic celebrations Thursday morning in Jalandhar's Mithapur and Khusrapur, the villages of four players including the captain of the Indian men's hockey team, as it beat Germany in the Tokyo Olympics and bagged a bronze medal.

This is India's first hockey medal in over four decades.

Captain Manpreet Singh and players Mandeep Singh and Varun Kumar hail from Mithapur, which is no stranger to producing hockey greats. Former Indian team captain Pargat Singh, now Congress MLA



Mandeep Singh's father plays the dhol as the family and residents celebrate in Mithapur village. Express

from Jalandhar Cantonment, is from the same village.

Hardik Singh, who scored the crucial goal on Thursday, is from Khusrapur. Though Hardik's

family was in Batala where his father, Superintendent of Police Virenderpreet Singh is currently posted, villagers left no stone unturned to celebrate the victory of

the "village's son".

In Mithapur, Mandeep's father Ravinder Singh played the dhol as the villagers burst crackers and handed out sweets. Manpreet and Mandeep's mothers were seen dancing along with hockey sticks. The celebrations went on for hours.

The Indian captain's mother, Manjit Kaur, teared up, saying: "Over 12 years of his hard work has paid off today. I had told him to bring gold but I am happy that our team got a medal. My happiness has no limit today. When they lost in the semi-final my health deteriorated but I could muster the courage today to watch the match and see them win."

Varun's father Brahma Nanad, who was a truck driver, said his son had seen many tough

days during his hockey career.

The families of the three players went to the village gurdwara to pay obeisance.

"My heart was beating fast throughout the match but it went out of control in the last few seconds. I can never forget this moment in my lifetime," said SP Virenderpreet Singh, who himself was a hockey player.

Hardik's mother said: "He was very upset after the semi-final. I told him to turn this defeat into victory in the next match and they did it. I had stopped watching the match when India was behind in the beginning and went to another room where I started praying and then my younger son came at the end of the match and told me they had won."

1 held, case lodged after 'caste slur' outside hockey player's house

LALMANI VERMA
DEHRADUN, AUGUST 5

A DAY after the family of Indian women's hockey team player Vandana Katariya alleged that a group of youths burst crackers and passed casteist remarks outside their house after India lost to Argentina in the Tokyo Olympics, police have arrested one accused and are carrying out raids in search of others.

Vandana's brother Chandra Shekhar said the accused live in their neighbourhood in Haridwar and two of them are hockey players. As per his complaint, the accused also said that



Hockey player Vandana Katariya

the Indian team lost due to players from a particular caste. "We saw three to four youths, bursting crackers and dancing outside our house. They said how can people of my caste play in the national team? Our family is in a state of fear because the youths also threatened to kill," Shekhar told *The Indian Express*.

The complaint alleged that a few "notorious elements", including Sumit Chauhan,

Ankurpal and Vijaypal danced in celebration, burst crackers in front of the house and hurled abuses with casteist remarks against Vandana and her family.

An FIR was lodged against the three accused and unidentified persons at Sidkul police station under IPC Section 504 (intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of the peace) and SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act.

The man accused, Vijaypal, was arrested from the Roshnabad stadium Thursday morning, police said.

Sidkul SHO L S Butola said the police have so far not found any evidence of bursting crackers and celebrations.

ECONOMY

SENSEX: 54,492.84 ▲ 123.07 (0.23%) NIFTY: 16,294.60 ▲ 35.80 (0.22%) NIKKEI: 27,728.12 ▲ 144.04 HANG SENG: 26,426.55 ▲ 231.73 FTSE: 7,115.41 ▼ 8.45 DAX: 15,703.67 ▲ 11.54

International market data till 1900 IST

WITH HIGH DEBT LEVEL, TELCO'S ABILITY TO GENERATE CASH FLOWS IS IMPACTED

To ring-fence ₹25K crore Vi exposure, banks look to convert debt into equity

GEORGE MATHEW
MUMBAI, AUGUST 5

WORRIED OVER the worsening financial profile of telecom firm Vi, formerly known as Vodafone Idea, lenders, led by State Bank of India, are taking a close look at the firm and considering various options, including conversion of debt into equity to safeguard their exposure.

The company, which has piled up a debt of close to Rs 1.50 lakh crore, has already breached specified covenants involving over Rs 15,500 crore, thus affecting its ability to generate cash flows. "We have to see whether conversion of debt into equity is a good idea. Banks will have to safeguard their interest," said a banking source.

Banks have an exposure of around Rs 25,000 crore in Vodafone. SBI has an exposure of

around Rs 11,000 crore, Yes Bank Rs 4,000 crore and PNB Rs 3,000 crore. If the company becomes a defaulter, it will add to the bad loan problems of banks, which are already struggling to recover funds from borrowers amid Covid.

Vodafone Idea shares have crashed 39 per cent to Rs 5.94 on the BSE in the last nine sessions, following the latest developments including the resignation of Kumar Mangalam Birla as non-executive chairman. As promoters (Vodafone Plc of the UK and Birla group) hold around 72 per cent stake in the company, conversion of debt into equity will bring down promoter stake. Banks can then try to bring in a white knight to save the company as they did in the case of Yes Bank bailout, as per sources.

As of March 2020, current and non-current borrowings includ-

BAD LOAN WORRIES

■ If Vi becomes a defaulter, it will add to the bad loan problems of banks which are already struggling to recover funds from borrowers amid the Covid pandemic.

ing interest accrued was Rs 121,226 crore and bank guarantee was Rs 21,432.9 crore, according to the annual report of the company for FY20. Annual covenant testing as on March 31, 2020 resulted in certain ratios breaching the specified covenant threshold for loans aggregating Rs 15,520.8 crore. Accordingly, the company has classified Rs 14,275.7 crore from non-current borrowings to

current maturities of long-term debt.

"Borrowings has been identified as a key audit matter due to debt covenant testing, change in credit ratings of the loans and various correspondences received from banks and financial institutions for additional security or increase in interest rate resulting in recognition, presentation and measurement complexities," the company's auditors said.

According to the company's auditors SR Batliboi & Associates, owing to its financial performance and financial condition, the company has breached its debt covenants as at March 31, 2020 for which it is in discussions with various lenders. "This has impacted the company's ability to generate the cash flow that it needs to settle/refinance its liabilities and guarantees as they fall due, resulting in

material uncertainty that casts significant doubt on the company's ability to make the payments mentioned therein and continue as a going concern," the auditors said. The said assumption of going concern is dependent upon positive outcome of company's and DoT application with respect to deferred payment of its AGR liability, waiver of debt covenant breaches and its ability to generate/arrange the cash flow that it needs to settle or refinance its liabilities and guarantees as they fall due. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter, it said.

Birla had, on June 7, written to the government, offering to "hand over" his 27 per cent stake in the company to any public sector, government, or domestic financial entity or to any other firm that the government may think fit, in order to keep the company going.

RETROSPECTIVE TAX SET TO BE A THING OF THE PAST

ORIGIN

2012: Govt loses Vodafone tax case related to its 2007 \$11-billion acquisition of 67% stake in Indian mobile-phone business owned by Hutchison Whampoa in SC; subsequently brings in retrospective amendment to overturn SC order



MAJOR CASES

VODAFONE

Under 2012 retrospective tax law, tax demand on telco, when last computed including interest/penalty, was ₹22,000 crore; Vodafone wins favourable arbitral award in Sept 2020; The govt asked to pay 4.3 mn pounds to company to cover legal costs



CAIRN ENERGY

March 2015: The govt serves capital gains tax notice on Scottish firm (the claim amount subsequently inflates to \$2.74 bn); group reorganisation under which firm sold its India arm to Vedanta in 2011 was cited; the govt recovers as much as ₹7,600 crore by seizure of shares of Cairn in its former India unit, dividend and withholding of tax refunds; In a December 2020 ruling, The Hague Tribunal invalidated India's claim; Cairn out to enforce award by attaching Indian assets overseas



ITC

The Supreme Court rules in the firm's favour in a ₹803-cr excise duty case in 2004; The govt issues an Ordinance to change law retrospectively; settlement cost the firm ₹350-crore

SANOFI-SHANTHA BIOTECH

French firm bought Indian company via takeover of owner ShanH in 2009; I-T raises tax demand; Hyderabad HC in 2014 rules against govt

ADITYA BIRLA NUVO

For purchase of Idea stake from AT&T, Indian firm asked to pay tax as AT&T refused; demand raised on Tata's purchase of AT&T holding in Idea also

SABMiller-Foster deal

Tax demand on transfer of IPR assets of Foster; HC rules no tax liability in India

Vedanta

Its \$981-mn takeover of Sesa Goa through arms abroad

GE-Genpact

American firm sells 60% in Genpact to two PE firms via foreign entities

IT IS the right time to remove the retrospectivity of legislation in section 9 and also in the validation clause of section 119 of the relevant Finance Act (of 2012). It was important to remove retrospectivity in law so that unnecessary litigation and costs and energies of the government are geared towards other things"

JB MOHAPATRA
CHAIRMAN, CBDT

THE GOVT'S decision to do away with retrospective tax demand provision is a bold & radical move. This'll now substantially encourage investments into the country"

UDAY SHANKAR
PRESIDENT, FEDERATION OF INDIAN CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

WE HAVE noted the introduction to the Indian Parliament of the Taxation Laws (Amendment) Bill 2021, which proposes certain amendments to the retrospective taxation measures that were introduced by the Finance Act 2012. We are monitoring the situation and will provide a further update in due course

CAIRN ENERGY PLC
IN LSE FILING

THERE ARE two different objectives for us. One is that there has been a policy of the government to have a predictable tax regime and not to have a retrospective taxation.

Objective two is also important, which is that we don't support the notion of the adjudication of the Indian tax law happening through foreign tribunals or legal fora ... this is an attempt to find a solution through the sovereign means of Indian law and not through arbitration"

TV SOMANATHAN

FINANCE SECRETARY

THIS POSITION on retrospective taxation has been the stated position of the government since 2014. These were termed as legacy issues by then Finance Minister Arun Jaitley in 2014. Retrospective taxation was still being seen as a sour point by investors"

TARUN BAJAJ

REVENUE SECRETARY

Recovery delayed, not derailed; optimistic of govt's intent: Naik

Mumbai: Larsen & Toubro chairman AM Naik said on Thursday the outlook for FY22 is one of cautious optimism, with the GDP regaining positive territory thanks to the base effect in the first half, followed by robust growth in the second.

"We therefore believe the recovery is 'delayed' and not 'derailed'," Naik said while addressing the company's AGM. "Given the scale of India's infrastructure deficit, we remain optimistic about the government's intent to complete the projects as envisaged in the National Infrastructure Pipeline."

The project pipeline is ex-



L&T chairman AM Naik File

pected to be collectively funded

by the Centre, international financial institutions, state governments, PSUs and the private sector, Naik said. "Since infrastructure investments serve the twin benefits of improving productivity and generating employment, we believe that the underlying macro drivers for investments in India remain intact. The company is poised to capitalize on these opportunities as they emerge." **ENS**

MARKETS WATCH
INVESTOR PARTICIPATION

Record rally pulls in new buyers: Retail holding at all-time high

SANDEEP SINGH
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 5

RETAIL INVESTORS are set to be big beneficiaries of the recent rally in the stock markets as they have increased their participation in holding of NSE-listed companies over the last 18 months. The retail holding of NSE-listed companies hit a record high of 7.18 per cent in the quarter-ended June 30, in line with the sharp rise in new investor accounts over the last 18 months and a jump in retail participation in both secondary and primary markets. It stood at 6.42 per cent in December 2019.

According to data sourced from primeinfoase.com, the retail ownership of NSE-listed companies, which stood at 6.42 in December 2019 and 6.55 per cent in March 2020, has now hit an all-time high of 7.18 per cent. The previous high was 7.1 per cent in June 2009. If only free float (non-promoter holding) is taken into account, retail ownership by value percentage went up to 14.49 per cent in the June quarter, up from 13.86 per cent in March. It stood at 12.75 per cent in December 2019.

Even in rupee value terms, the retail holding in companies listed on the NSE reached a record high of Rs 16.18 lakh crore from Rs 13.94 lakh crore on March 31, 2021, an increase of 16 per cent.

"A buoyant secondary

Retail holding of NSE-listed companies hit a record high of 7.18% in June quarter

market and a flurry of new listings have helped in channelising retail savings into the capital market," said Pranav Haldea, MD, PRIME Database Group. Even as retail participation has been on a rise since January 2020, the six-month period between January and June 2021, has witnessed a higher momentum. While the retail holding dipped from 7.01 per cent in September 2020 to 6.9 per cent in December 2020, it rose significantly over the next six months, which also witnessed record opening of investor accounts and fund mobilisation through IPOs, which attracted big retail participation.

From 2.01 crore investor accounts at the end of January 2020, CDSL saw its investor accounts more than double to 4.19 crore accounts by the end of July 2021.

As retail investors and HNIs preferred to invest directly into the stock markets, data shows MF holding of NSE-listed companies came down to 7.25 per cent in June quarter.

Full report on www.indianexpress.com

FUTURE RETAIL-RELIANCE DEAL

SC verdict on Amazon pleas likely today

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday is set to pronounce its verdict on e-commerce major Amazon's pleas against the merger of Future Retail Ltd (FRL) with Reliance Retail and is likely to decide whether the Singapore's Emergency Arbitrator (EA) award,

restraining the Rs 24,731-crore deal, was valid under Indian law and can be enforced.

According to the apex court website, the verdict would be pronounced at 10.30 am by a Bench of Justices RF Nariman and B R Gava, which had reserved it

Fertiliser shortage looms as global prices skyrocket

HARISH DAMODARAN
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 5

ASHORTAGE of fertilisers is looming on the back of skyrocketing international prices whose effects, it is feared, may be felt during the coming rabi season ahead of the February-March Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Uttarakhand. The supply crunch is due to the overall bullish global agri-commodity markets, a "temporary suspension" of exports by China and western economic sanctions against Belarus.

Industry data accessed by *The Indian Express* shows imports of all major fertilisers by India falling in April-July 2021 over a year ago. That includes urea (from 23.43 lakh tonnes to 22.05 lakh tonnes), di-ammonium phosphate (24.06 lt to 22.03 lt), muriate of potash (16.06 lt to 10.33 lt) and complex fertilisers (6.43 lt to 5.45 lt).

But it isn't only imports. Even domestic production has been lower for urea (78.82 lt in April-July 2021 against 82.18 lt in April-July 2020) and di-ammonium phosphate (11.11 lt against 12.66 lt). It has, however, risen for fertilisers with lower nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), potassium (K) and sulphur (S) content. Thus, output of NP/NPK complexes has increased (from 27.89 lt to 30.91 lt) along with that of single super phos-



The shortage may be felt in the coming rabi season. File

phate (from 17.01 lt to 17.06 lt).

"There is no shortage for now or in the remaining part of the current kharif cropping season (June-September). The problem may arise in rabi season after October," said industry sources. The reason for that is soaring international prices, both of fertiliser products as well as their imported inputs.

Last year at this time, India had contracted urea imports at around \$290 per tonne CFR (cost plus freight). Those prices are now at \$510-\$515 per tonne. Import prices have similarly surged over the last one year for di-ammonium phosphate (from \$330 to \$630 per tonne) and intermediates such as phosphoric acid (from \$625 to \$998), ammonia (\$205 to \$670) and sulphur (\$75 to \$210).

Morocco's state-owned OCP has, moreover, raised its phosphoric acid price for the July-September 2021 quarter to \$1,160 per tonne CFR, which Indian di-ammonium phosphate manufactur-

UK upgrades India to 'Amber' list: How it benefits travellers

PRANAV MUKUL
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 5

THE UK has changed the status of India under its traffic light system for international travel placing the country in the 'Amber' list now from 'Red' list, UK Secretary of State for Transport Grant Shapps said in a tweet. Being in the Amber list means that travel restrictions for travellers from India will be relaxed. This comes in the backdrop of several other countries including Spain, France, Germany, and the UAE relaxing travel rules for certain Indian passengers.

What does the United Kingdom's decision mean?

Effective August 8, 4 am UK time, India will be placed in the Amber list, primarily meaning that travellers from India will not have to undergo mandatory institutional quarantine that was applicable for passengers from Red list countries. Also, for countries under the Red list, only British or Irish nationals and residency visa

holders were allowed to enter.

However, those traveling to the UK from India will still need to quarantine themselves for 10 days at a location of their choice — at home or a hotel. Further, the travellers will need to have a Covid-19 test done three days before travel, and pre-book two Covid-19 tests to be done during their quarantine period there.

Are there any exemptions for UK travel?

Passengers who are fully vaccinated in the UK or its vaccine programme overseas, or in any European country or the US, will be exempt from the quarantine requirement. Those under the age of 18 will also be exempted. For vaccinated passengers, the final dose should have been taken at least 14 days ahead of travel. Also, passengers exempted by virtue of their inoculation will still need to take the two Covid-19 tests upon arrival on Day 2 and Day 8.

What is the update on other international destinations?

While regular international scheduled flights have been banned by the Indian government, flights are operating under the air bubble arrangements with a number of countries.

Notably, on account of the second surge of Covid-19 in India during April, several countries had restricted their borders for entry of travellers from India.

The US in May, for example, had issued a ban for Indian travellers except their own citizens. However, it later relaxed travel for student visa holders.

Last month, Germany also reclassified India to "high (Covid) incidence areas" — down from the higher travel restriction level of "virus variant areas". With this, it had removed the entry ban for travellers from India.

Full report on www.indianexpress.com

BRIEFLY

Maruti output

New Delhi: Maruti Suzuki India, in a filing Thursday, said its total production in July rose 58 per cent on-year to 1,70,719 units. It had produced a total of 1,07,687 units in the year ago period.

Aviation losses

New Delhi: Indian airlines and airports incurred financial losses worth Rs 22,400 crore last fiscal, amid the coronavirus pandemic, according to data provided by Minister of State for Civil Aviation VK Singh to the Lok Sabha on Tuesday. Further, AAI's revenue came down to Rs 889 crore during April-June this year, he said. **PTI**

EVsat JNPT

New Delhi: In line with its Green Port initiatives, Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) on Thursday deployed nine electric vehicles for the movement of employees within its premises. **ENS**

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
MANDYA INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES
MANDYA-571 401
(Autonomous Medical Institution, Government of Karnataka
Director: 08232-222086, Fax : 08232-231001,
CAO : 08232-231197, FA : 08232-401198,
E-Mail Address : mimsmandya@gmail.com
No:MIMS/OS/HRM/E-tender/01/2021-22
Date:04.08.2021

NOTIFICATION

Sub:- E-tender for providing Group C & D, House Keeping and Security Services to the Mandya Institute of Medical Sciences (MIMS), Mandya -extension of time for filing tenders –reg.

Ref:- (1) MIMS e-tender notification of even No. dated: 29.06.2021.
(2) MIMS e-tender notification of even No. dated: 29.07.2021.

With reference to the above, having considered necessary to extend the date for filing e-tenders, the last date fixed as **5th August 2021 @ 5.30 PM** vide e-tender notification cited under reference (2) is extended till **9th August 2021 @5.30 PM**. Further the technical bids that may be received from the bidders will be opened on **11th August 2021 @11.00 AM**. The date for opening the Commercial/Financial bid will be intimated in due course. The intending bidders may note the above changes for their needful.

Sd/-Director,
Mandya Institute of Medical Sciences, Mandya.
DIPR/AD-MDV/MCA/011/2021-22

The Brihanmumbai Electric Supply & Transport Undertaking
(Of The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation)

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Note: For more details, log on to website <https://mahatenders.gov.in>
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NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Tender No.	Description	Due Date
212213 002420	Enlistment of Freight Forwarders for Offering Ocean Freight for Export of Paper / Board in 20' / 40' containers to Colombo Port	17.08.2021

Detailed terms & condition, tender fee, EMD etc. are available in tender document at our websites : www.tnpl.com / www.tenders.tn.gov.in

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CIN:U24232RJ2011SGC035067

Ref: F.02(104)/RMSCL/Proc./Surgical(Drug)/NIB-15/2021/ Dated:

Notice Inviting E-Bids

E-bids are invited up to 6.00 PM of E bid for Rate Contract cum Supply and Empanelment of Surgical (Drug Items). Details of NIB-15/2021 may be seen in the Bidding Documents at our office or at the website of State Public Procurement Portal (MSC2122GLRC00059) <http://sppp.raj.nic.in>, www.dipronline.org, <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>, www.rmsc.rajasthan.health.gov.in and may be downloaded from there.

Note:- If any amendment is carried out in the tender specifications and terms & conditions following pre-bid meeting, the same will be uploaded on the Departmental website www.rmsc.health.rajasthan.gov.in, sppp.raj.nic.in and <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>. In case any inconvenience is felt, please contact on telephone number i.e. 0141-2228064

Raj.Samwad/C/21/4405 **Executive Director (Procurement), RMSCL**

12 THE WORLD/SPORT

TOPOF THE WORLD



Raisi with lawmakers in Tehran Thursday. *AP*

IRAN

Raisi takes oath as new President

EBRAHIM RAISI, the protégé of Iran's supreme leader, was sworn in as the country's new President during a ceremony in parliament on Thursday, an inauguration that completes hard-liners' dominance of all branches of government in the Islamic Republic. The former judiciary chief known for his distrust of the West takes the reins at a tense time. *AP*

USA

Ties with Epstein a mistake: Gates

IN AN interview on CNN on Wednesday evening, Bill Gates acknowledged that his relationship with the disgraced financier Jeffrey Epstein was "a huge mistake," and he told the host, Anderson Cooper, that his divorce, which became final this week, was "definitely a very sad milestone." *NYT*

RUSSIA

News outlets, aid group shut down

TWO RUSSIAN news outlets and a legal aid group backed by a leading Kremlin critic shut down Thursday after authorities blocked their websites, the government's latest move targeting media, opposition and rights activists ahead of Russia's September parliamentary election. *AP*

Ignoring WHO call, Germany, France to give vaccine boosters

REUTERS

PARIS, BERLIN, AUGUST 5

GERMANY AND France will go ahead with Covid-19 vaccine boosters from September, disregarding an appeal by the World Health Organisation (WHO) to hold off until more people are vaccinated across the globe.

The decision to press ahead with booster shots despite the strongest statement yet from the WHO highlights the challenge of dealing with a global pandemic while countries try to protect their own citizens from the more infectious Delta variant.

French President Emmanuel Macron said France was working on rolling out third Covid-19 vaccine doses to the elderly and vulnerable from September.

Germany intends to give boosters to immunocompromised patients, the very elderly and nursing home residents from September, the health ministry said.

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus called on Wednesday for a halt to vaccine boosters until at least the end of September, saying it was unacceptable for rich countries to use more of the global vaccine supply.

US: Taking steps to give path to citizenship to legal immigrants' children

Washington: The Biden administration is taking steps to provide a legal pathway to citizenship to children of legal immigrants, the White House said after a group of such youngsters, mostly Indians, expressed fear of being deported when they turn 21.

These children, known as documented dreamers, are living in the US as dependents of long-term non-immigrant visa holders, including H-1B workers.

According to Improve the

Pak has other 'options', Imran aide tells US

SAJJAD HUSSAIN

ISLAMABAD, AUGUST 5

UPSET OVER US President Joe Biden's reluctance to telephone Prime Minister Imran Khan, Pakistan's National Security Adviser Moeed Yusuf has said that Islamabad has other "options" if the American leader continues to ignore the country's leadership.

"The President of the United States hasn't spoken to the Prime Minister of such an important country who the US itself says is make-or-break in some cases, in some ways, in Afghanistan — we struggle to understand the signal,



Pakistan PM Imran Khan

right?" Yusuf said in an interview with *The Financial Times*, according to the *Dawn* newspaper here. "We've been told every time that (the phone call) will happen, it's technical reasons or whatever. But frankly, people don't believe it," he said. "If a phone

call is a concession, if a security relationship is a concession, Pakistan has options," he added, refusing to elaborate.

The US State Department, however, has assured Islamabad that Washington recognises Pakistan's vital role in restoring peace in Afghanistan and wants Islamabad to play that role.

"Pakistan has much to gain and will continue to have a critical role, and be well-positioned to have a role in supporting the outcome" in Afghanistan, said US State Department spokesperson Ned Price. "We'll continue to work and to communicate closely with our Pakistani partners on this," he added.

But *The Financial Times* reported on Tuesday that Yusuf complained about President Biden's failure to contact Prime Minister Khan as Washington sought help to stop the Taliban taking over Afghanistan.

"The cold shoulder from Washington comes as the Taliban has captured swaths of territory across Afghanistan in a ruthless offensive emboldened by the US pullout," the report added. It said that while Yusuf did not elaborate on his options, "Pakistan has cultivated deep ties with its 'iron brother' China, which has invested billions in infrastructure projects as part of its Belt and Road Initiative." *PTI*

Mob attacks temple in Pak; India lodges protest

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, AUGUST 5

INDIA ON Thursday summoned Pakistan's charge d'affaires and lodged a "firm protest" expressing Delhi's "grave concerns" over a mob attack on a Hindu temple in Punjab province of Pakistan. New Delhi also asked Islamabad to ensure the "safety, security and well-being of its minority communities".

On Wednesday, hundreds of

people vandalised a temple at Bhong village in Rahim Yar Khan district and blocked a highway after a nine-year-old Hindu boy, who had been accused of urinating in an Islamic seminary, was granted bail by a local court.

People in both countries saw images and video footage of the desecration of the temple on social media platforms. Pakistan's Supreme Court Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed took cognisance of the incident on Thursday after parliamentarian

Ramesh Kumar Vankwani, the patron-in-chief of the Pakistan Hindu Council, met him to discuss the issue.

In New Delhi, the Ministry of External Affairs' official spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said, "We have seen disturbing reports on social media of a violent mob attack on a Ganesha temple in Rahim Yar Khan in Punjab province of Pakistan. The mob attacked the temple, desecrated the holy idols and set fire to the premises. In addition to attacking the temple,

FRENCH NATIONAL TRIES TO ENTER SEVERAL EMBASSIES, INCLUDING INDIA'S

Drama in Beijing diplomatic area as man tries to avoid quarantine

K J M VARMA

BEIJING, AUGUST 5

A FRENCH national, who wanted to avoid Covid-19 quarantine after visiting medium risk areas in China, created a commotion in the high-security diplomatic area here on Thursday when he tried to enter several embassies, including that of India, while being chased by Chinese health officials in PPE kits.

After being denied entry by the French embassy in Liangma Qiao here, following an alert that

he skipped quarantine rules, he tried to hop over the fences of the embassies of Malaysia, Israel and India, which were guarded by the Chinese military personnel.

He was finally caught near the Indian Embassy by Chinese authorities, who briefly closed the roads to prevent him from escaping.

As videos shot by bystanders went viral, the Embassy of India quickly put out a notice in Indian community social media groups, refuting rumours that someone from the mission has been picked up by Chinese officials in PPE kits.



Indian embassy in Beijing. *File*

The issue has been resolved and was handled peacefully, the note said.

Chinese authorities also immediately disinfected the place before leaving, it said.

Israeli airstrikes hit Lebanon after rocket attacks

Escalation at politically sensitive time

LAURIE KELLMAN & ZEINA KARAM

TEL AVIV, AUGUST 5

ISRAEL ON Thursday escalated its response to rocket attacks the previous day from Lebanon by launching rare airstrikes on its northern neighbour, the army and Lebanese officials said.

A statement from the Israeli military said jets struck the launch sites from which the rockets were fired, as well as an additional target used to attack Israel in the past. The military blamed the state of Lebanon for the shelling and warned "against further attempts to harm Israeli civilians and Israel's sovereignty."

The overnight airstrikes in southern Lebanon were a marked escalation at a politically sensitive time. Israel's new eight-party governing coalition is trying to keep peace under a fragile ceasefire that ended an 11-day war with Hamas' militant rulers in Gaza in May. Several incidents



Fields burn after being hit by a rocket fired from Lebanon into Israeli territory. *AP*

leading up to this week's rocket fire from Lebanon have focused attention on Israel's northern border. The United States swiftly condemned the attacks on Israel.

Lebanon is mired in multiple crises, including a devastating economic and financial meltdown and a political deadlock that has left the country without a functional government for a full year.

Lebanese President Michel Aoun said Israel's use of its air force to target Lebanese villages "is the first of its kind since 2006 and indicated the presence of aggressive, escalatory intentions" against Lebanon. *AP*

According to the notice, the detained foreigner was not Covid positive but had recently travelled to a medium risk area and wanted to avoid the quarantine regime advised by his residential complex.

Beijing and several Chinese cities have stepped up quarantine protocols in the last few days for people who have travelled to areas within the country which have witnessed a spike in Covid-19 cases, especially that of the Delta variant.

According to China's National Health Commission, 85 new

Covid-19 cases, including 62 locally transmitted cases and 40 imported cases were reported on Wednesday. The locally transmitted cases were reported from Jiangsu, Hunan, Beijing, Shandong, Henan, Yunnan and Hubei, the commission said on Thursday.

The total number of confirmed Covid-19 cases on the mainland reached 93,374 by Wednesday, including 1,285 patients still receiving treatment, and 4,636 had died due to the virus which was first reported in the central Chinese city of Wuhan in December 2019. *PTI*

Kohli, Pujara fall to Anderson as England hit back

SHAMIK CHAKRABARTY

AUGUST 5

DAY 2 of the first Test sprang to life on either side of the lunch break. Rohit Sharma's dismissal at the stroke of lunch left the door ajar for England. After the break, James Anderson did what James Anderson does — make life difficult for the best of batsmen.

Anderson bowled six overs in the morning, slipped out a couple of beauties, but Rohit and KL Rahul more or less blunted him, playing close to the body and playing late. Also, the pacer was about a foot short in terms of hitting the optimum English length. It changed post-lunch.

His length became fuller, he was making the ball to straighten after pitching and the zip was back. Cheteshwar Pujara shouldered arm and survived a leg-before decision against Ollie Robinson on DRS, but Anderson at the other end was relentless.

An inswinger pitched on the off stump and seamed away, taking the outside edge of Pujara's bat to Jos Buttler behind the stumps. During his brief stay at the crease, India's No.3 looked a tad edgy.

The lead-up to the battle royal had a big applause from a full house at Trent Bridge. Virat Kohli was walking out to bat. Anderson, his tail up, was waiting. The first round of the contest lasted just one delivery. The ball once again swung in before straightening. Kohli had to play the line, but the India captain stretched out a little to defend it.

Pumped up

Anderson set off for a high-octane celebration. Kohli walked back to the pavilion. "It's always nice to get a world-class batsman out. (For me) it was just emotions coming out," Anderson said after the day's play. Two wickets on Thursday took his Test tally to 619, on a par with Anil Kumble.

In 2014, Kohli faced 50 balls from Anderson, scored 19 runs



James Anderson dismissed key batsmen Cheteshwar Pujara (4) and Virat Kohli (0). *Reuters*

and got out to the bowler four times. In 2018, he made it one-all, facing 270 deliveries from the England fast bowler and scoring 114 runs without being dismissed even once. Season 3 of the battle has started with an Anderson knockout, as Kohli's golden duck helped England fans find their voice. For the first two hours, their Indian counterparts were raising the rafters.

Under pressure, India's approach became uncertain. Ajinkya Rahane survived a run-out opportunity before running himself out. Rahul had pushed a Robinson delivery towards short point and yelled out a 'no' straightaway. But Rahane hared down from the non-striker's end and a direct hit from Jonny Bairstow made him a sitting duck. India's porous middle-order calls for consistency from

the team's vice-captain.

From 97 for no loss at one stage, India suddenly slid to 112/4. They eventually finished the day on 125/4, 58 runs adrift of England's first innings total.

It could have been worse, for Anderson had Rahul fishing at a delivery — another inswinger that straightened after pitching — but Dom Sibley couldn't hold on to the catch at second slip. Rahul was batting

From 97 for no loss at one stage, India suddenly slid to 112/4. They eventually finished the day on 125/4, 58 runs adrift of England's first innings total.

on 52 then. Returning to the Test fold after two years, the 29-year-old scored a polished half-century in testing conditions. He gradually regained his fluency and remained unbeaten on 57.

As for Rohit, yet again, a very promising innings was nipped in the bud. It happened in Australia. It happened in the final over before lunch at Trent Bridge also. England pacers barely used the short ball against the Indian openers. So when Robinson bowled a bouncer to Rohit, it had a surprise element. The latter hooked instinctively and found Sam Curran at deep backward square leg. The ball got big on him and maybe, Rohit could have avoided playing the shot. "That's my shot. Five yards here and there, and the fielder probably would have struggled. A bit unlucky to get out that way," the opener said post-day.

Rohit now has a tight defence, which holds him in good stead in swinging conditions. All through his 175-minute stay at the crease, he was untroubled. His range allowed him to score off every scoring opportunity. Rohit and Rahul looked to be in total control and the hosts were looking flat, when the former fell prey to his shot selection.

Rishabh Pant came and charged down the track against Anderson. A Motera carry-forward heightened the excitement. Much to everybody's chagrin, dark clouds and rain appeared to halt the proceedings. Despite two resumption attempts, the day was done.

BRIEF SCORES: India 125 for 4 (Rahul 57*, Sharma 36, Anderson 2-15) trail England 183 (Root 64, Bumrah 4-46, Shami 3-28) by 58 runs.

Messi to leave Barcelona, says club



The Spanish club cited economic and structural obstacles to the renewal of deal. *Reuters*

BARCELONA: Barcelona said Thursday that Lionel Messi will not stay with the club after Spanish league financial regulations made it impossible for a deal to be reached between the club and the player.

Barcelona said in a statement that a deal for a new contract had been reached but financial "obstacles" made it impossible for the player to remain with the club.

"Despite club and player reaching an agreement and their clear intention to sign a new contract today, this cannot happen because of financial and structural obstacles," the club said.

It blamed "Spanish league regulations" for not allowing the club to sign a new contract with the player. His previous one had ended on June 30.

"As a result of this situation, Messi shall not be staying on at

FC Barcelona," it said. "Both parties deeply regret that the wishes of the player and the club will ultimately not be fulfilled."

"FC Barcelona wholeheartedly expresses its gratitude to the player for his contribution to the aggrandizement of the club and wishes him all the very best for the future in his personal and professional life," the statement said.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

New Zealand to tour Pakistan after 18 years

Karachi: New Zealand will play three ODIs and five Twenty20 Internationals on their first tour to Pakistan in 18 years, the country's cricket board said on Thursday. The Pakistan Cricket Board announced that the three ODIs, which is part of the ICC World Cup Super League, will be held in Rawalpindi, while the T20Is will be staged at the Gaddafi stadium in Lahore. New Zealand will tour Pakistan from September 15 to October 3. The PCB said New Zealand will be the first side to visit Pakistan in what will be a bumper 2021-22 season for the local cricket fans. After New Zealand, the England men and women sides will play white-ball matches in Pakistan before West Indies are expected to arrive in December. *PTI*

New-look archery team for Worlds

Sonepat: India will have a much changed squad at next month's Archery World Championships after none of the archers, who had participated at the Tokyo Olympics, could clear the selection trials here on Thursday. The four archers, who couldn't win a medal at Tokyo, failed to finish inside top-three in the two-day trials conducted just a day after their return from the Olympics. World number one Deepika Kumari, who lost out to eventual gold medalist An San in the quarters at Tokyo Olympics, finished fourth in the trials. Komalika Bari, 17-year-old upcoming Haryana girl Ridhi Phor, and Ankita Bhakat made the cut taking the top-three spots. *PTI*

Football legend SS Narayan passes away

Mumbai: Former India goalkeeper SS 'Babu' Narayan passed away at his residence in Thane on Thursday. The 86-year-old is survived by his two daughters and one son. Narayan played for India at the 1956 and 1960 Olympics, and was in the team that finished second at the 1964 Asian Cup. Domestically he played for Bombay in the Santosh Trophy, but was also an avid basketball player and represented Maharashtra. Narayan made his debut against Yugoslavia at the Melbourne Olympics on December 4, 1956. He represented the country in nine matches and was part of the two Olympics 1956 (Melbourne) and 1960 (Rome). *ENS*



MEDAL TALLY

COUNTRY	G	S	B	TOTAL
1. China	34	24	16	74
2. USA	29	35	27	91
3. Japan	22	10	14	46
4. Australia	17	05	19	41
5. ROC	16	22	20	58
6. G Britain	16	18	17	51
7. Germany	09	09	16	34
8. France	07	11	09	27
9. Italy	07	10	18	35
65. India	00	02	03	05

*G- Gold, S- Silver, B- Bronze

Eye on India

ATHLETICS

MEN'S SOKM RACE WALK FINAL

Gurpreet Singh
2:00 AM

WOMEN'S 20M RACE WALK

Priyanka Goswami and Bhawana Jat
1:00 PM

MEN'S 4X400 METRE RELAY, ROUND 1

GOLF

WOMEN'S ROUND 3

Aditi Ashok, Diksha Dagar
5:29 AM, 05:48 AM

HOCKEY

WOMEN'S BRONZE MEDAL MATCH

(MEDAL ALERT)

INDIA VERSUS GREAT BRITAIN

A day after the men's hockey team re-turned with a bronze medal, the first for the country in 41 years, the women face Great Britain.

07:00 AM

WRESTLING

WOMEN'S 50KG FREESTYLE

SEEMA BISLA
08:07 AM

MEN'S 65 KG FREESTYLE

(MEDAL ALERT)

BAJRANG PUNIA

India's medal hopes now rest on Bajrang Punia, who will begin his campaign against Kyrgyzstan's Ernazar Akmataliev.

08:49 AM

HIGHLIGHT REEL

VINESH, DEEPAK FALTER

■ Vinesh Phogat's redemption dream came crashing down after a shock quarter-final exit and Deepak Punia let slip a bronze in the last 10 seconds of his play-off bout. Vinesh was left to endure a second consecutive heart-breaking quarter-final exit from the Games after a massive upset against Vanesa Kaladzinskaya. Deepak Punia came agonisingly close to winning a bronze medal on his Olympic debut but conceded a take-down in last 10 seconds of the play-off.



ADITI ASHOK IN MEDAL HUNT

■ Aditi Ashok was in contention for a historic Olympic medal after carding a five-under 66 in the second round of the women's competition at the ongoing Games. She rolled in five birdies, which included three in her last four holes at Kasumigaseki Country Club to lie tied second on nine-under 133.

Cousins Simranjeet, Gurjant capitalise on understanding developed from young age

NITIN SHARMA

CHAHAL KALAN (GURDASPUR), AUG 5

AS TODDLERS, Simranjeet Singh and Gurjant Singh would often visit their paternal and maternal grandparents (same house and family) and spend time with them at village Chahal Kalan on the Mehta Chowk-Batala highway in Gurdaspur district. The cousins' journey in hockey would start at the same academy near Batala in the early 2000s.

On Thursday morning, as the 24-year-old Simranjeet scored a brace in the bronze-medal playoff victory over Germany - one of them with an assist from Gurjant - his father Iqbal Singh would make phone calls from Pilibhit to their native places to share the joy.

"Today, two medals have come in our joint family. While the whole country celebrates the medal, we three families are celebrating the medal from afar. To see Simranjeet and Gurjant help India make history is the biggest joy for us. Simranjeet had been staying with my parents and elder brother since he was eight. He would visit us once in year. Today's medal-winning moments have made all that worth it," Iqbal told The Indian Express from Majhara village in Pilibhit district of Uttar Pradesh.

About 200m from the Singh household in Chahal Kalan is the Guru Nanak Hockey Academy run by some NRIs from the village where a young Simranjeet would learn the basics of hockey. While Gurjant would visit the Singh household too on his summer vacations, it was not until 2004 when Gurjant joined the Cheema Hockey Academy at village Shahbad near Batala that the families considered hockey as a career option.

Over time, the two would be a regular feature in village or district teams as junior players. "Gurjant would often cycle or come on bus to our academy from his maternal grandparents' home and later joined the academy hostel. His ball control skills were very good and his balance on the field was something that prompted us to ask his family to send him to the Chandigarh Hockey Academy two years later. Gurjant had joined there a year earlier.

SANDIP G

AUGUST 5

WHEN PR Sreejesh was in primary school, at a village 30 kilometres east of Kochi, his physical education teacher was convinced that he had unearthed the next sporting sensation. Sreejesh was good at everything - he could hurl the discus and javelin a fair distance, he could leap, smash and spike, he was in both volleyball and basketball teams, could perform the long jump as well as high jump. Sometimes, he could run too, though he himself despised running.

He revelled in every sport, expect hockey that is.

So versatile was Sreejesh that he was referred to GV Raja Sports School, the government-run primary sports school in state capital Thiruvananthapuram, where he could hone whatever sporting skill he wanted.

It was difficult to convince his sceptical parents, who were farmers, before his teachers dangled the golden carrot of those times. "Sports quota, government job." Sreejesh too was gung-ho, except when the moment of departure arrived, an ineffable heaviness weighed his mind down. "I had never stayed away from them, and the day I was to board the train, I broke down. I didn't want to leave. I am usually a confident boy, but that day, I felt uneasy," he had once recollected to this reporter.

Thiruvananthapuram, just 200km away, seemed like eons away. An unfamiliar culture, food habits and surroundings, a faraway universe from his family, friends and farms. But as the train chugged along the lovely backwaters and rivulets on that scenic route, Sreejesh rearranged his morale. At the end of the three-hour journey, as he set foot in Thiruvananthapuram, he suddenly felt grown-up and confident, and ready to face the world. "I felt a sudden wave of confidence, as if my life was going to change, that this was the beginning of my real journey," he said.

A new beginning

Life was to change beyond Sreejesh's wildest imagination. At the school, he passed by a group of teenagers playing hockey. He had little clue that this was to be his destiny. The next day, he walked into the throws arena. He was left shocked by the physicality of fellow trainees. "I felt like a worm." He stopped by the basketball and volleyball courts. "I seemed like a dwarf." He deliberated on football. "No, it involved a lot of running." Cricket? "No, I didn't get the kicks." Finally, he made friends with a couple of hockey guys who were his age and of similar physique. He used to hang around with them and would sometimes wield the stick, but without much success.

That's when one of the hockey coaches, Jayakumar, spotted him. "He was a defender or a centre-half, who was a lazy runner. But had excellent reflexes that always saved him. Then I thought why not make him a goalkeeper. Kids don't like being 'keepers, but it's an important role," he explains.

Years later, those split-second reflexes would make him one of India's finest goalkeepers. His saves throughout the games were instrumental in orchestrating India's bronze medal in Tokyo, ending a 41-year drought. The saves against Germany were spectacular, especially the one he pulled off in the dying



Sreejesh sits atop the goalpost after India confirmed their first hockey Olympic medal in 41 years. (Below) The goalkeeper at home in Kochi.



stages of the match, locked at 5-4. The penalty corner looked goal-bound before his reflexes intervened. It was not reflexes alone that went behind the save, but his unfettered passion, his unbudging will.

After the game, India coach Graham Reid said, "Having someone in goal as reliable as Sreejesh helps. He's a stalwart of Indian hockey. He's done a lot of work in the background to get to where he is today."

To be the stalwart, it needed hours on field.

"He took time to get used to the gear, but everything else he learned fast. He had that game sense and anticipation, and for his age, he had the presence," Jayakumar says. Then as Sreejesh hit teenage, he started growing taller and muscular and was actually mistaken for a shot-putter or javelin thrower. "A lot of people thought he was one of them," he says.

Though Jayakumar was certain of his ward's potential, he knew it would be wasted in Kerala, a hockey backwater, which considers it a game "where India was once glorious but now reeling", where the sport is barely

watched even during the Olympics.

No takers for hockey

That the state built its first astro turf in 2015 nails the anonymity of the game in this neck of the woods. Just seven have represented the country from the state, and except Sreejesh all in the pre-astro turf era. He had just a ragged goalkeeping gear, and worse, it was not even available in his town. Coincidentally, though, the state's two most reputed hockey players were goalkeepers - Helen Mary (2002 Commonwealth Games gold medallist) and Manuel Frederick (1972 Munich Games bronze medallist).

Like the baseball club in Hindi movies, the hockey stick was that clawed piece of wood bad guys brandished in movies. So Jayakumar called one of his friends, then national junior coach Harendra Singh to check out the youngster. The latter, coincidentally, had come to watch a U-14 tournament in Thiruvananthapuram. Impressed, he invited Jayakumar and

How soft-spoken Ravi beat iron deficiency on the path to silver medal

ANDREW AMSAN

NEW DELHI, AUG 5

AS SOON as Ravi Dahiya's fate was sealed in the 57kg freestyle gold medal match, there was stunned silence, looks of disbelief and disappointment on the faces of trainees gathered to witness their 'brother's' final bout inside a jam-packed wrestling hall of the Chhatrasal Stadium.

The young wrestlers were certain that their fellow trainee, Ravi bhai, would bag the top spot. They couldn't accept the 4-7 defeat he suffered against Russian Olympic Committee's Zaur Uguev. After Deepak Punia's loss in the bronze medal bout, soon afterwards, a few senior wrestlers came into the hall and tried to lift the mood. "Arey, gold nahi toh kya, silver toh hai (Hey guys, if not the gold our Ravi has won a silver)," a trainee yelled out.

Moments later, the dhols players were in action but initially, no one was in a mood to dance. Around 100 kilograms of ghevar (a disc-shaped deep-fried sweet) was ordered apart from countless boxes of rasgullas. A DJ system with massive JBL speakers was also set up in front of the dorms.

"Come on boys, dancing is also an exercise," said a coach who pulled out some unique dancing moves which looked more like a training routine. Soon the boys joined in. A box of sweets was playfully snatched away into one of the dorms, before it was locked from inside. Minutes later, a group of youngsters walked out with an empty box and sugar-soaked fingers, indicating everything was normal at the akhara again.

At Ravi's dorm, his sparring partner and roommate Arun was taking a short break after a series of TV interviews. Ravi's bed, like that of other trainees, had a folded old blanket on top which doubled up as the mattress. "We are not used to sleeping on cushioned mattresses. This is how we like it," says Arun, who has been Ravi's roommate for over seven years now.



Ravi Dahiya's sparring partner and roommate (left) Arun in the dorm they share with two junior wrestlers.

"Chhota sa tha woh. (He was really small). In the first four years, he did not even win a national medal. I didn't have a lot of expectations from him initially. His parents would often call me and ask me to help him. He was trying hard but just couldn't progress," recalls Arun who is several years senior to Ravi.

When Ravi had almost given up on the sport, someone advised a medical check-up. Tests revealed that the youngster had an iron deficiency.

"Once that was sorted, he never looked back. It amazes me how that young little boy who hardly speaks has reached the biggest stage in the world and won a silver. Did you see him after his semifinal win? No roars, no animated fist pumps, he just walked away humbly. That's what he is," says Arun.

Soft-spoken and kind-hearted

Every single trainee, from the junior-most to his peers, at the akhara, has just one thing to say about Ravi, "Bahut seedha aadmi hain. (He's a very straightforward person). I call him kharghosh (rabbit) because I think he

Sreejesh could understand this at that time. "It's difficult to love a goalkeeper. He is invisible, and is only in the limelight when he makes a blunder. When I was young, I didn't know who India's goalkeeper was then. Besides, I am not someone who goes behind attention, never gone behind superstar-dom," he said.

Common man becomes icon

Not for long though. The sports-mad state desperately needed a sporting hero/heroine. No footballer of IM Vijayan class had emerged since his farewell; no one of the Anju Bobby George mettle either; none after Jimmy George and Tom Joseph in volleyball; Sreesanth, well, was in a whirlpool of mess; Sanju Samson was the perennial, fragrant bud that never blossomed. The Indian Super League had not yet descended and the Indian Premier League no longer had a local team.

Then came the barrel-chested Sreejesh with his twinkling reflexes and bullet-proof heart. The 2014 Asian Games gold medal certainly helped build his stature, but it was not merely sporting accomplishments that made him an icon. His demeanour too played a huge role.

In image-building, he didn't need PR machinery. His genuineness endeared, striking an inviolable chord with the masses. He was their ideal sporting hero - a complex concept, as they would adore Maradona, but would not want one of their own to be a Maradona off the pitch. Sreejesh never spun a scandal, was utmost gamely, remained grounded, never threw celebrity tantrums, never ripped off in luxury cars or flaunted monstrous houses (that ubiquitous Malayali fetish), never plunged into ill-advised business ventures. He spoke, talked and walked like an every-man one sees on the street.

A tattoo on his right bicep perhaps is his only signage of uberness. He embodied the son-of-the-soil spirit that every Malayali secretly prizes close to one's heart. Nothing has changed in him. Sreejesh himself had said that a more comfortable home than his netted cage is the verandah of his house, where he could sprawl after a heavy lunch and slip into an afternoon siesta.

Last year, he was spotted cleaning the unkempt lane in front of his house in a shirt and lungi with a handloom towel wrapped around his forehead; the video went viral. To curious onlookers, he gently replied: "Who else would wash the dirt that has accumulated in front of my house?"

In television shows, he barely utters a word in anger, his slang unstained by affectations, still permeating the innocence of the countryside. Like Vijayan, he is relatable and approachable, down to earth, and doesn't entice the hidden tall-poppy syndrome.

"He remains very humble to the day, did not get dragged into a luxurious life. He is a role model for young sportsmen," says Jayakumar. And he has got an entire state hooked to the unfamiliar rhymes and rhythms of a game that they have never embraced or welcomed.

That, perhaps, is the biggest legacy of Sreejesh - he made football-loving, volleyball-playing, cricket-watching Malayalis watch hockey, follow the game that's not their first love (or second or third). A journey that began from a sleepy Kochi suburb has waltzed into the collective Malayali sports consciousness.

Cousins Simranjeet, Gurjant capitalise on understanding developed from young age

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Over time, the two would be a regular feature in village or district teams as junior players. "Gurjant would often cycle or come on bus to our academy from his maternal grandparents' home and later joined the academy hostel. His ball control skills were very good and his balance on the field was something that prompted us to ask his family to send him to the Chandigarh Hockey Academy two years later. Gurjant had joined there a year earlier.

Making of a medal

A 'James Bond' who cleaned at dhabas before practice. One 'Mr Backhand' who wowed the Germans and an 'Australian-type' from Punjab. The drag-flicker who sculpted his shoulder playing with a tractor and a pair of cousins linking attack and defence. From Karnal to Kochi, Imphal to Varanasi, India's history-makers assembled to complete comebacks after blood clots and injuries, to honour their lineages and end an excruciating 41-year-long wait.

SHAHID JUDGE, SHASHANK NAIR and MIHIR VASAVDA tell their stories

1

RUPINDER PAL SINGH
(30, DEFENDER)
Faridkot, Punjab

Rupinder's elder brother, once a budding state-level player, gave up his hockey career and education to support the financially distressed family and ensured Rupinder's foray into the sport would not be affected. A cousin of former India stalwart and Olympian Gagan Ajit Singh, it's easy to recognise Rupinder Pal Singh in a crowd – given his 6-foot-4 frame. He's known, curiously, among his teammates as 'Bob' or 'Bobby,' and is considered one of the most lethal drag-flickers ever. He scored four times in Tokyo, including the winner against Germany in the bronze-medal playoff.

2

SURENDER KUMAR
(27, DEFENDER)
Karnal, Haryana

The man from an unlikely hockey destination, Kurukshetra, began playing on pebble-laden grounds near his home before he finally struck bronze. In a very short time, Kumar has turned into one of the calmest and most self-assured defenders in the team, and has great tackling abilities. His stellar rise has also sparked a revolution of sorts in Kurukshetra, where dozens of young kids play the sport wearing jerseys with his name on the back. His family is working in full swing to make sure his new house is ready when he returns – complete with the national flag and Olympic rings as decoration.

3

MANPREET SINGH
(29, MIDFIELDER)
Mithapur, Punjab

The most capped player on the team, Manpreet was lured into the sport by the prizes his elder brothers won when they played. There was opposition at home though, as his mother was not keen to play lest he hurt himself with the hard hockey ball. On one occasion his brothers locked him in a room to stop him from attending training, but he managed to escape. One of his first cash awards was Rs 500. There will be a lot more now, for the inspirational and hard-working captain of the national hockey team, once they return to India with the country's first medal in 41 years.

4

GURJANT SINGH
(26, FORWARD)
Amritsar, Punjab

The forward, known for scoring and/or assisting during crucial moments, scored India's fastest ever goal, after just 13 seconds, during the 5-2 win over the Netherlands at the FIH Pro League in January 2020. But he was already a well-known goalscorer by then. He started playing after watching his elder brother, who played at the national level. He's got family on the Olympic team as well, and he paired up well with his cousin Simranjeet to assist India's equalising third goal against Germany. He had also scored the second goal at the 2016 Junior WC – a powerful tomahawk (reverse stick) drive.

5

HARMANPREET SINGH
(25, DEFENDER)
Jandiala Guru, Punjab

A drag-flick specialist and one of the most potent scorers, it's a trend that has continued since his junior days. He scored six times at Tokyo 2020, behind just three players on the leaderboard. He claims that he started developing the shoulder muscles needed for the art when, as a 10-year-old, he'd sneak his way onto his father's tractor but would have to wrestle with the rusty gearstick before he could get it started. A few years later he'd move to the famed Surjit Academy where he'd develop his craft further. He's not just a threat in front of goal, but also a reliable defender and passer.

6

PR SREEJESH
(33, GOALKEEPER)
Kizhakkambalam, Kerala

Growing up in the rural suburb of Kochi, the farmer's son played whichever sport that came his way, except hockey, which hardly struck a chord among the youth in Kerala. But his shift to Thiruvananthapuram's GV Raja School, a resident sports school, turned his life around. It was here that he got hooked to hockey after a coach spotted his reflexes. He walked into the junior camp for the Asia Cup 2004 without a proper goalkeeper's kit, and couldn't make the cut. Later he was selected for a four-nation tournament in Malaysia.

7

AMIT ROHIDAS
(28, FORWARD)
Sundergarh, Odisha

Amit Rohidas is used to taking blows. Be it the 20-25 hits to the body that he takes rushing out to defend a penalty corner routine, or seeing his sister's education being halted because the family simply couldn't afford it. Hailing from the same village as Dilip Tirkey, Rohidas' father would earn his money working on other farmers' fields. The player's first big break came when he was drafted by the Ranchi Rhinos for 16 lakhs in 2013 in the Hockey India League. Rohidas used the money to fund his sister's education. He had been in and out of the national setup until his form and skill grew consistently in the past few years.

8

LALIT UPADHYAY
(29, FORWARD)
Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh

The son of a cloth-shop owner, Lalit and his elder brother followed one of their cousins to the popular UP College ground. His natural dribbling skills caught the eye of experts. Lalit was recommended to an academy in nearby Karampur, where a hockey-loving philanthropist and politician, late Tej Bahadur Singh, built a pitch between fields. Close to getting selected for the national team, without his knowledge, his name was used by a news channel in a sting operation on a hockey official. Almost 10 years and many rejections later, Lalit is an India regular. His father, these days, delivers couriers for a few banks in Varanasi.

9

BIRENDRA LAKRA
(31, DEFENDER)
Rourkela, Odisha

One of the vice-captains in the team, Lakra and his two siblings have played for the national men's and women's teams. The popular defender's journey in the national setup has not been smooth. An anterior cruciate ligament injury in 2016 saw him ruled out of Rio Games. The comeback was slow and so was his speed. But the 8-month layoff was aided by a return to the national camp and guidance under physios.

10

KRISHAN PATHAK
(24, GOALKEEPER)
Kapurthala, Punjab

The son of a Nepalese immigrant, Krishan used to help by moving debris in construction sites to help ends meet. Tragically, he lost his mother when he was 12, and then his father in 2016; both dying of sudden heart attacks, the latter six months before Krishan was to play at the Junior World Cup in 2016. He was not keen on playing hockey, but after his father insisted, he moved to the Surjit Academy when he was 12.

11

NILAKANTA SHARMA
(26, MIDFIELDER)
Imphal East, Manipur

Manipur has Mary Kom, it has Mirabai and now it has Nilakanta. The 26-year-old, standing at a diminutive five-foot-four, began his journey at the Posterior Hockey Academy in Manipur and then made the life-altering decision of moving to Bhopal at 16. With time, he has blossomed into a quiet hard worker with the penchant to fill any hole in defence or thread in a pass to for attack.

19

DILPREET SINGH
(21, FORWARD)
Batala, Punjab

The youngster is no stranger to making big moves in his life. He took up hockey on the grass fields of his village when he was seven, inspired by his father Balwinder who served in the army. His talent was evident, and he made his way to the famous Surjit Academy in Jalandhar. He honed his skills as a prolific goalscorer and, after scoring nine goals at the Under-21 Sultan of Johor Cup in 2017, earned his senior team call-up at just 18. He scored twice at Tokyo, the consolation against Australia, and the opener in the quarterfinal against Great Britain.

18

HARDIK SINGH
(22, FORWARD)
Khusropur, Punjab

The youngster comes from a long lineage of international hockey players. His grandfather Preetam Singh Ray, a former Indian Navy coach, introduced him to the sport. His father Varinderpreet played for the national team. An aunt, Rajbir Kaur, played four consecutive Asian Games from 1982 to 1994 and was the national team captain. An uncle, Jugraj Singh, the talented drag-flicker whose career tragically ended after a car accident. Then there's another uncle, Gurmail, who was a part of the team that won gold at the 1980 Moscow Games. Hardik now becomes the second Olympic medalist in the family.

17

SIMRANJEET SINGH
(24, FORWARD)
Chahal Kalan, Punjab

His cousin Gurjant, also in the Olympic squad, was given a nickname for his reverse-hit skills. But it was Simranjeet whose backhand shot was India's first goal in the bronze-medal match. He later scored his second and India's third after combining with Gurjant. The cousins were also a part of the India team that won the Junior World Cup in 2016 in Lucknow. Simranjeet and Gurjant were both on the scoresheet in the 2-1 win over Belgium in the final. He followed in his cousin's footsteps by joining him in the senior team, making his debut in 2018 at an invitational tournament in New Zealand.

16

MANDEEP SINGH
(26, FORWARD)
Jalandhar, Punjab

The striker emerged on the senior national scene long before most of his colleagues from the 2016 Junior World Cup-winning team made the cut. The talented forward has been a consistent performer since he debuted in 2013, though he didn't make the team that went to Rio in 2016. As a child, he was more interested in cricket, though he did start playing hockey when he was five. It was only years after watching his brother play that he decided to take up the sport full-time. He was a part of the team that won bronze at the 2018 Asian Games, silver at the Champions League in 2018.

15

VARUN KUMAR
(26, DEFENDER)
Mithapur, Punjab

He dreamt of making a career in hockey since he was in Class 6. Three attempts to make a comeback from injuries, and support from a school friend and national team captain Manpreet Singh propelled Varun. The path wasn't easy, as his father had to manage the house and Varun's needs with the Rs 5000 he earned as a truck driver. He made his way to the Surjit Singh Academy and promised to be one of the best finds in Indian hockey. The family's financial problems eased after his elder brother was inducted into the Armed Forces and are now likely to vanish after this bronze.

14

SHAMSHER SINGH
(24, FORWARD)
Attari, Punjab

Hailed by Graham Reid as an 'Australian type of player' and forged in the halls of the famed Surjit Academy, Shamsheer started out as a midfielder and gradually moved towards the forward line. Hailing from the Attari district, a few kilometres separated from the India-Pakistan border, Shamsheer struggled for hockey equipment from a very young age, and his father's meagre earnings as a farmer were the only financial support. His first hockey stick would be repaired by his father using nails and tape and used for two years. He had won just six senior caps before leaving for Tokyo and his selection had triggered a huge debate.

13

VIVEK SAGAR PRASAD
(21, MIDFIELDER)
Hoshangabad, Madhya Pradesh

Mentored by the son of Dhyan Chand, Ashok Kumar, he became the second-youngest player, at 17 years and 10 months, to debut for India when he played against New Zealand in 2018. His hockey career was buoyed by a move to Bhopal when he was 15 before a collarbone fracture threatened a premature end. The son of a school teacher, Prasad was patient during the recovery stage – a testament to his calm demeanour and his penchant for being an avid chess player. He led the junior team to the Youth Olympic Games silver medal in 2018. Now he's got bronze at the senior level.

12

SUMIT KUMAR
(24, FORWARD)
Sonepat, Haryana

Born into a family that had no land and could barely scrounge up the money for two meals, hockey was a distant dream and yet one which he and his brother Amit shared. Even milk was a luxury that they couldn't afford. Both brothers worked as cleaners at local dhabas in Murthal, Haryana, and would then head to hockey practice afterwards. This practice of working while continuing to quietly nurture the hockey dream led him to inter-district tournaments, a sports hostel in Gurugram and eventually the Indian national team. Nicknamed 'James Bond', he was part of the junior team that won the World Cup in 2016.



GRAHAM REID (COACH, 57) AUSTRALIA

FOR REID, the medal holds a special significance. As Australia's chief coach at Rio 2016, he could manage only a sixth-place finish, just two above India. So a medal in Tokyo marks a sweet redemption for him. He became India's coach in mid-2019, hasn't met his family since the pandemic began and made his small apartment inside SAI Bangalore his home. Known for his unique ways to prepare a team – he made Australia sit in a bus for 45 minutes longer to

prepare the players mentally in case their bus lost its way in Rio, something that's not uncommon at the Olympics – Reid is soft-spoken, good-humoured, great man-manager and tactically strong. In his two years with the team, he's worked on the team's consistency, instilled measured aggression and brought a certain amount of calmness, which was evident in the way the team defended under pressure against Germany on Thursday.



ROBIN ARKELL (STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING COACH, 33) SOUTH AFRICA

IF INDIA are able to outrun their opponents, Arkell is the man largely responsible for it. The South African, who did his MPhil in Biokinetics from Cape Town University, has been with the team for a little more than four years and during this time, he's ensured India are ranked among the fittest teams in the world. Under Arkell, who has worked with South African rugby before coming to India, Indian players have been clock-

ing an average yo-yo test score of 21 to 23, with some players going above 23. To provide a comparison, the BCCI has kept 16 as the basic benchmark for the cricket team. During the lockdown, he ensured the team's fitness with a range of short but high-intensity drills, and worked with the half-a-dozen players who were Covid positive last year to make sure they weren't affected physically after recovering from it.