

CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS OF THE TAMIL NADU LEGISLATURE

And

Unveiling of Portrait of Former Chief Minister

Kalaaignar M. KARUNANIDHI

SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND

Hon'ble President of India
will be the Chief Guest

Thiru **BANWARILAL PUROHIT**

Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu
will preside

in the presence of

Thiru **M.K. STALIN**

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu

K. SRINIVASAN

Secretary,
Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly

M. APPAVU

Speaker,
Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly



Date : 2.8.2021, Monday, 5.00 P.M.

Venue : Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly Chamber, Secretariat, Chennai - 9.

■ ARCHANA SUBRAMANIAN

Ever wondered why CEOs, leaders and recruiters talk endlessly about soft skills? Find out in *Skill It, Kill It*, a new book in which entrepreneur Ronnie Screwvala shares personal stories and observations from his failures and successes, to give you an insider's view of the 'invisible' skills that can cut years off your learning curve. Excerpts from an interview:

We all know Ronnie Screwvala, the businessman. Tell us more about the writer. What prompted you to write this book?

I am an accidental author. The inspiration for this book stemmed from the interactions with learners. I think lifelong learning is an integral element for growth in this era's hyper-competitive environment. Today, to make a mark, you need to have a strong element of focus. If you want to be in the top 20-25 percentile of your organisation, you have to come out of your comfort zone, upgrade again, specialise and continue this cycle till you have achieved your goal. While talking to students, I saw a serious gap in their soft skills. Now while 'skill' means lots of things to a lot of people, it cannot be restricted to a degree, diploma or even certifications. I believe that equipping yourself with the right communication skills is important and, without it, people are often left behind, despite having the right hard skills for the job.

What skills do students need today?

Through school, we tend to focus on our grades and rank and do not invest any effort in acquiring soft skills like communicating effectively or inculcating the art of storytelling. Communication is a severely underrated skill, especially in this digital remote work era. Most people assume that communication is tethered on oratory skills or

'COMMUNICATION is an underrated skill'

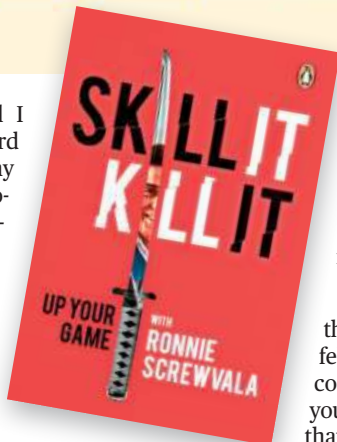
Entrepreneur Ronnie Screwvala talks about the importance of lifelong learning and why he wrote *Skill It, Kill It*



command of the language. Actually it is so many things, including listening, absorbing and knowing when to stop. If you acquire the art of communicating through storytelling, you will be able to influence and impact people by shaping their minds. Stories help us connect with the audience and foster empathy. Storytelling is a lifelong skill that ought to be honed.

You've coined some new words. Tell us about the new LOL.

This comes from my own experience as a young professional. I would be so excited about putting a point across that I would not allow the person before me to finish what he/she was saying. Not only was it rude but also wrong.



Listening is a skill I have worked very hard to improve through my career. It requires focused thoughts, attention to detail, feedback, and the ability to absorb what another person is speaking in order to decode what they are really saying.

So, for me *Listen, Observe, Learn* is the new LOL. To truly listen and then act on feedback from others will help us avoid repeating mistakes and accelerate professional growth and change. Moreover, even great ideas and teams can be aligned if you follow the new LOL.

Why is upgrading and future-proofing one's career important?

This is where the concept of Lifelong Learning comes into play. If you were to believe that your greatest learning and great-est failure are yet to transpire, then you are allowing yourself to keep an

open mind. This, in turn, opens your mind to learning and upgrading your skills because it reminds you that you have still got so much to learn.

Why do you debunk the idea of multitasking and emphasise the importance of saying no?

My dog taught me that multitasking is overrated and often counter-productive! To put it simply, multitasking leads to distraction, which leads to all kinds of hazards. Multitasking fosters the habit of distraction from the task at hand, leads to a decline in the quality of your work, and to an eventual decline in productivity overall. Eventually it leads to feeling overwhelmed and disconnected on a daily basis.

SCHOLARSHIPS

■ **IIT-BHU Varanasi Department of Electrical Engineering Junior Research Fellowship**

A research opportunity for the project "Development of Cyber Resilient Protection Scheme for AC Microgrid".

ELIGIBILITY: Open to candidates below 28 years, with an M.E./M.Tech degree in Electrical Engineering with specialisation in Power System or equivalent with a minimum of 60% marks or CGPA 6. They should also be GATE/NET qualified.

PRIZES AND REWARDS: Up to ₹35,000 plus HRA

APPLICATION: Email

DEADLINE: August 06
b4s.in/edge/IBVEO

■ **ONGC Scholarship to Meritorious General Category Students**

The aim is to provide financial support to the meritorious students belonging to the economically weaker General category.

ELIGIBILITY: Open to General candidates in the first year of Engineering, Geology/Geophysics, MBBS, or MBA programmes. Gross family income should be less than ₹2 lakh per annum from all sources. They must have obtained a minimum of 60% marks or equivalent CGPA/OGPA in Class 12 for Engineering and MBBS courses, and a minimum of 60% marks or equivalent CGPA/OGPA in graduation for PG courses in Geophysics/Geology and MBA.

PRIZES AND REWARDS: ₹48,000 per annum

APPLICATION: Online and post

DEADLINE: August 06
b4s.in/edge/OSB8

■ **DXC Progressing Minds Scholarship**

DXC Technology supports meritorious students from underprivileged sections of the society.

ELIGIBILITY: Open to students who are Indian nationals and currently in the first year of B.E./B.Tech. programme in CS/IT/EE/EC streams in the academic year 2021-22. They must have obtained at least 60% marks in the previous class. The annual family income should not exceed ₹4 lakh from all sources. Applicants must not be availing any other scholarship benefits of ₹6,000 per annum or more. Children of DXC/Buddy4Study employees are not eligible.

PRIZES AND REWARDS: 50% of the total fees or ₹40,000 per annum (whichever is less)

APPLICATION: Online

DEADLINE: August 15
b4s.in/edge/DXCI

Courtesy: buddy4study.com

SAVE THE DATE

■ **Dean's International Excellence Award**

The University of Strathclyde's (Glasgow) Dean's International Excellence Award - Postgraduate Taught offers all qualified international postgraduate students a merit-based scholarship of £4,000 towards the first year

of tuition fees of a full-time Master's EdD Education or one-year MRes programme in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.

ELIGIBILITY: Candidates must be available to commence their academic studies in the U.K. by the start of the academic year in September/October 2021. They must have an offer of study for a full-time postgraduate programme and must have paid the

tuition fee deposit before August 31.

DEADLINE: August 31
For more details, email hass-pg-enquiries@strath.ac.uk

■ **Sanskriti University extends admission deadline**

Sanskriti University, Mathura, is inviting online applications for admission to diploma, undergraduate, and postgraduate programmes.

ELIGIBILITY: For UG programmes, those who have passed or will appear for the Higher Secondary (10+2) exam from any recognised Board of Education. For Diploma programmes, students must have passed the Class X exam from any state or central board. For PG programmes, those who have a undergraduate degree.

DEADLINE: September 30
<https://bit.ly/3Ca30pQ>

A guided path

Uncertain about your career options? Low on self-confidence? This Q&A column by Nandini Raman, practising counsellor and trainer, may help



OFF THE EDGE
NANDINI RAMAN

I am a Commerce graduate. I am currently a school teacher, a stock market trader, a cryptocurrency trader, a CSE aspirant, an aspiring writer, a farmer, and a YouTuber. I see immense opportunities in each of these. But, the limited time available in a day has started to take its toll. Please help me to figure out a way to manage them. - Sourav Baroi

Dear Sourav, I understand your dilemma on having to balance all of this. If you are going to get distressed, overwhelmed and not enjoy these activities, it is pointless. Make a list of one or two from all these that you love, makes you feel great about yourself, are passionate about, helps you earn, you are exceptional at, and is also a hobby and a passion. You could also have a cause that is

close to your heart where you consciously dedicate time, money, and resources to make a difference.

I am an English Hons. student, but I want to pursue Mass Communication. I do not know whether to start an Instagram page for content creation, or study and equip myself with skills first. I have a podcast channel, but it is not monetised in India though it is growing. -Yashika Garg

Dear Yashika, Do a course in Mass Communication and equip yourself. Education is never wasted; you will learn the tips and tricks that will always come handy. Today, technology is a great boon to youngsters, and your podcast is testimony to it. However, should you want to work for a media conglomerate in the future, your education should be able to open doors. Also, keep working on commissioned projects and content creation on Instagram. It is a matter of time before you can monetise your podcast.

I'm currently in my first year of B.A. LL.B from National Law University, Patiala. How and when should I start preparing for the judiciary exams to have a better chance of clearing it right after my graduation? - Siddharth Shankar Singh

Dear Siddharth, Focus on topics that are important from the point of judicial services exam. Cultivate a rational and reasonable world view and

have independent opinions, which are free from bias. First, be clear of what the state patterns are. Start your preparation with bare acts, with interpretations and illustrations - break it into parts and then study about 3-5 sections a day. Ensure that you read the newspaper every day to know what is happening in the world. Work on your language skills, both English and Hindi. GK, current affairs are important too.

I am from Agra, and in the final year of B.CA. I want to do an MBA and am preparing for the CAT. But others are suggesting that I do an M.CA. Which is a better option? - Sheetal Jain

Dear Sheetal, Where is your interest and what subjects are you fond of? MCA and MBA are good courses and capable of getting you good jobs. But, they are different fields. If you are a technology enthusiast or have an interest in software and programming, then, opt for MCA. MBA is the right option for candidates who are good at managerial and administrative skills.

Disclaimer: This column provides advice, guidance and suggestions on education and careers. It is a guiding voice from a practising career counsellor.

The writer is a practising counsellor and a trainer. Send your questions to eduplus.thehindu@gmail.com with the subject line 'Off the edge'.

Study abroad webinar

SantaMonica Presents The Hindu Study Abroad Webinar on study avenues in key destinations such as Canada, the U.K., Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, Sweden, Germany, the U.S. and more. The session will cover in-demand courses with economical fees, how to identify the right college, process of application, timelines, eligibility criteria, scholarships and financial aid options and post-study career possibilities and PR prospects. The speakers are Nicy Binu, Director, SantaMonica Study Abroad Pvt. Ltd.; Divya S. Pillai, Project Manager, Canada; Sobhitha Thomas, Project Manager, the U.K.; Liju Jacob, Project Manager, Europe; and Aleena George, Project Coordinator, the U.S. The session will be moderated by Pankaja Srinivasan, freelance writer.

On August 8, at 5.00 p.m.

To register, visit <https://bit.ly/SANTATHE> or scan the QR Code



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Placement Highlights

- Number of companies visited - 110
- Highest Salary Offered - 31 Lakh
- Companies offering more than 10 LPA - 21

Highlighted Recruiters

Amazon
Capgemini Digital
Cognizant
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NEARBY



DU admissions to UG courses start today

NEW DELHI
 Registrations to various undergraduate courses in Delhi University are set to begin from Monday. The registration portal will be open till August 31 for aspirants to complete the application process.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

Grey Line extension to open on August 6

NEW DELHI
 The DMRC on Sunday said the Najafgarh-Dhansa Bus Stand extension of Grey Line and the Trilokpuri section of Pink Line between Mayur Vihar Pocket 1 and Trilokpuri Sanjay Lake stations will be inaugurated on August 6.

CITY ▶ PAGE 2

Heavy rain leads to road cave-in, waterlogging

NEW DELHI
 As rain continued to lash Delhi, waterlogging was reported in several parts of the city. After a road cave-in under the IIT flyover, another incident was reported on Ashoka Road on Sunday.

CITY ▶ PAGE 2

Assam, Mizoram agree to ease border tension

Will approach SC for amicable solution, says Assam CM

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT GUWAHATI

The Chief Ministers of Assam and Mizoram have sought to ease tensions along their troubled inter-State border following a discussion with Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

An exchange of fire between the police forces of both States on July 26 left six Assam policemen and a civilian dead and 60 others, including Superintendent of Police of Cachar district Nimbalkar Vaibhav Chandrakant, injured. Assam claimed the firing was one-sided and unprovoked, while Mizoram said they retaliated to the aggression by the Assam police.

Mizoram Chief Minister Zoramthanga on Sunday took to Twitter to say that he had a telephonic discussion with Mr. Shah and his Assam counterpart, Himanta Biswa Sarma. "We agreed to resolve the border issue amicably through meaningful dialogue," he tweeted.

He also asked the people of Mizoram to "avoid posting sensitive messages and

Our main focus is on keeping the spirit of northeast alive. What happened along the Assam-Mizoram border is unacceptable to the people of both States... Border disputes can only be resolved through discussion

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA
Assam Chief Minister

make judicious use of their social media platform" to prevent any possible escalation of the situation. He later deleted the tweet, but retweeted a post by Dr. Sarma.

"Our main focus is on keeping the spirit of northeast alive. What happened along the Assam-Mizoram border is unacceptable to the people of both States," Dr. Sarma said. "Border disputes can only be resolved through discussion."

Dr. Sarma later told presspersons in Guwahati that his

Satellite maps to be used

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

With the inter-State border dispute between Assam and Mizoram flaring up, the Union government could be relying on satellite mapping to demarcate boundaries and settle such disputes between States, senior officials said on Sunday.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

government would approach the Supreme Court in 15 days for an amicable solution to the boundary row for both States to follow.

The two States share a 164.6-km volatile border, with each government accusing the other of not maintaining the status quo and encouraging its people to encroach. The border conflict is decades-old but things started getting violent from October 2020.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8



Smashing victory: Bronze medallist P.V. Sindhu celebrating during the medal ceremony for the women's singles badminton event in Tokyo on Sunday. She defeated He Bingjiao of China 21-13, 21-15 in the third place play-off. •GETTY IMAGES

Sindhu bags bronze, scripts history

Badminton ace becomes the first Indian woman to win two Olympics medals

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI

P.V. Sindhu wrote her name into the history books with a bronze at the Tokyo Olympics on Sunday.

The badminton star became the first Indian woman to win two Olympics medals, with her latest effort being a follow-up to the silver at the previous Games in Rio de Ja-

neiro in 2016. In the third-place play-off, the 26-year-old defeated He Bingjiao of China 21-13, 21-15.

It was a clash that the Hyderabad baddie pocketed with ease. Sindhu set the tempo, dictated the angles and toyed with her rival. And during those brief moments when she seemed over-eager, her coach Park Tae-Sang hinted

to her that she should calm down.

Having lost to Tai Tzu-Ying of Chinese Taipei in the semi-final on Saturday, Sindhu was even more driven to seize the one medal at stake. And it showed as she crafted the contest's template, a trait that she maintained right through her Olympics' campaign except in the semi-

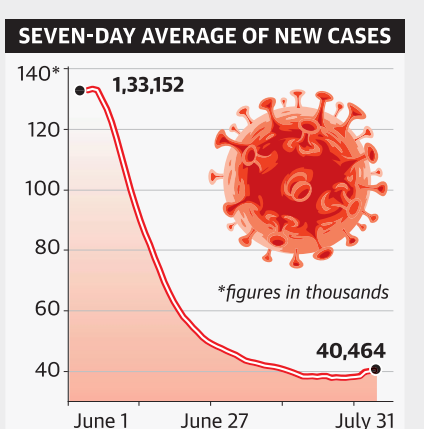
nals against a splendid Tzu-Ying.

Sindhu's Olympic encore, even if the medal shades are different, has ensured that she would be considered one of the greatest ever Indian sportspersons.

A MEMORABLE SUNDAY ▶ PAGE 13
ROAD TO BOXER'S HOME BEING REPAIRED IN ASSAM ▶ PAGE 10

COVID spikes again

The number of COVID-19 cases in India is on the rise again. After about three months of a consistent decline, the seven-day average number of infections increased to nearly 40,500 from 38,000 in the previous week. Kerala and Maharashtra reported a sharp rise in the share of new cases. Kerala's share in total cases jumped to 38% in July



% SHARE OF NEW CASES

State	January	February	March	April	May	June	July
Kerala	36%	37%	6%	6%	11%	18%	38%
Maharashtra	20%	37%	60%	26%	13%	14%	20%
Northeast India	1%	0%	0%	1%	3%	8%	12%
Tamil Nadu	4%	4%	3%	4%	10%	17%	6%
Andhra Pradesh	1%	1%	1%	3%	7%	9%	6%
Odisha	1%	1%	0%	1%	4%	7%	5%
Karnataka	4%	3%	4%	8%	12%	11%	5%
West Bengal	4%	1%	1%	4%	6%	6%	2%
Telangana	2%	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%

GST revenues hit ₹1.16 lakh crore in July

Rise in collections a sign of economic rebound: FinMin

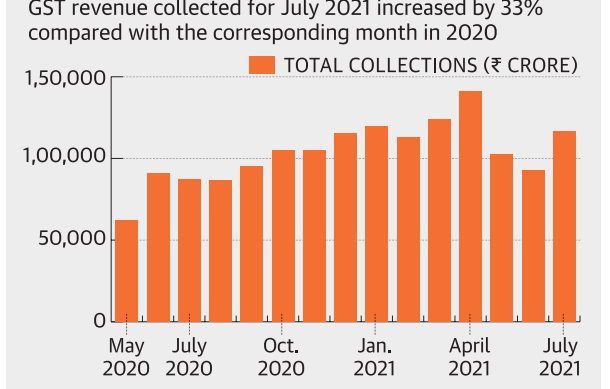
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The gross Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenues in July recovered sharply to ₹1,16,393 crore, after slipping below the ₹1 lakh crore mark for the first time in eight months in June.

The Union government called the collections a sign of a rapid economic recovery from the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, though economists said they indicated an "incomplete" rebound.

"With the easing out of COVID restrictions, GST collection for July 2021 has again crossed ₹1 lakh crore, which clearly indicates that the economy is recovering at a fast pace. The robust GST revenues are likely to continue in the coming months too," the Finance Ministry said in a statement on Sunday.

Trending upwards



The July numbers include returns filed between July 1 and 5, amounting to ₹4,937 crore, as taxpayers were given relief on delayed return filing for June in the wake of the second wave.

The July collections were 33% higher than a year ago, with the GST collected on the import of goods rising 36% and domestic transactions, including import of services, growing by 32%.

"There is a heartening sequential increase, as well as

Survivor alleges harassment by PSOs

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

The Unnao rape survivor has approached a Delhi court alleging harassment by the personal security officers deputed on the direction of the Supreme Court for her protection.

District and Sessions Judge Dharmesh Sharma directed the Investigating Officer of the CBI to submit an impact assessment report. "Application has been moved on the behalf of the complainant that she and her family members were harassed by the PSOs in a sense that they are not allowing her to enjoy her liberties," the court said.

DETAILS ON ▶ PAGE 9

comparisons with July 2020, there were significant variations - Odisha and Jharkhand reported a 54% uptick, followed by Haryana (53%) and Maharashtra (51%), while Tamil Nadu and Gujarat clocked 36% growth.

Kerala reported a 27% surge in GST revenues, despite having stricter COVID-19 restrictions in place than States such as Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Rajasthan, which recorded a growth of 18%, 15% and 12%, respectively.

"The pace of growth across the States was highly uneven in July 2021, with some industrial heavyweights recording a sharp expansion," Ms. Nayar said.

The Ministry attributed June's blip in GST revenues at ₹92,849 crore, after posting above the ₹1 lakh crore mark for eight successive months, to the complete or partial lockdowns in most States and Union territories in May.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

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Timings
DELHI

MONDAY, AUG. 02		
RISE	05:44	SET 19:12
RISE	00:25	SET 14:12
TUESDAY, AUG. 03		
RISE	05:44	SET 19:11
RISE	01:02	SET 15:07
WEDNESDAY, AUG. 04		
RISE	05:45	SET 19:10
RISE	01:42	SET 16:02

Delhi Weather

	max	min
Delhi City	32	25
Safdarjang	32	25
Palam	32	25

Delhi Palam Today
31°C Few spells of light to moderate rain and thunder-shower likely at some places with cloudy sky and gentle winds.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
32°C Moderate winds and mainly comfortable day. Light rain and thundershower may occur with cloudy sky.

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THE HINDU
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Delhi zoo reopens after over 3 months

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The Delhi zoo was reopened to the public on Sunday, three and a half months after it was temporarily shut due to a surge in COVID-19 cases during the second wave.

The facility had earlier remained closed for over a year due to the pandemic and bird flu and was reopened on April 1.

"Rain could not deter the spirit and enthusiasm of the people, especially the young ones. We are trying our best to make their visit worthwhile," Zoo Director Ramesh Pandey said.

The zoo will operate in two shifts - from 8 a.m. to noon, and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Visitors are required to buy tickets online on the zoo's website or at the entry gates using QR codes. The administration has also introduced cycles for its staff in a bid to minimise noise pollution due to vehicles and reduce carbon footprint.

According to Mr. Pandey, the zoo had recorded only 124 animal deaths, the lowest in the last three years, while it remained closed to the public in 2020-21. There are 94 species and 1,162 animals in the zoo at present.

Campaign to strengthen legal services launched

Several projects related to it unveiled

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM

Supreme Court Judge and Executive Chairman of National Legal Services Authority, Justice Uday Umesh Lalit, on Sunday unveiled a year-long campaign by Haryana Legal Services Authority to strengthen legal services in the State and inaugurated several projects associated with it.

Launching the campaign, "Quality of Legal Services is Key to Access to Justice for All", at Apparel House in Sector-44 here, Justice Lalit inaugurated a dedicated video-conferencing facility for structured and regular consultation between the inmates and legal aid counsel in all districts of the State and kids zones for the children accompanying their parents to Alternative Dispute Resolution Centres.

He also released a short film on Juvenile Justice Act (Care and Protection) Act, 2015; animated short clip on rights of a person at pre-arrest and arrest stage and awareness posters enumer-



Students at the School of Open Learning in Delhi University. •SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA



Delhi University is offering 65,000 UG seats for aspirants this year for which registrations will begin today. Principals and officials believe that an increased number of students scoring above 95% could lead to higher cut-off marks

SHINJINI GHOSH
NEW DELHI

Registrations to various undergraduate courses in Delhi University (DU) are set to begin from Monday. The online registration portal will be open till August 31 for aspirants to complete the application process.

According to DU officials, the university will permit candidates applying under the ECA (extra-curricular activities) and sports categories to upload certificates from the last four years instead of the usual three, as an exception due to the pandemic. Like last year, no trials will be held and admissions under these categories will be based on certificates submitted by the candidates.

Rajeev Gupta, Chairperson of DU Admissions, had earlier said: "All trial-based admissions including sports and ECA quota will be completely based on certificates this year. Students can upload certificates from last four years. This is a modification to what was done last year. For this year's admission process, candidates can pick the three best certificates from the last four years and upload."

Yet another year of admissions

Mr. Gupta said that this modification was brought in to ensure that students who had missed out on participating in events last year due to the pandemic can also apply by choosing their three best certificates.

Same procedure
According to the university, the entire admission process will be held online and aspirants are not required to visit colleges and departments for any purpose. The admission criteria have also remained unchanged for this year, according to officials.

"The admission committee has taken a conscious call to not change any eligibility criteria. Considering the unprecedented situation, the fee structure, registration and cancellation charges have also been kept the same. Colleges will also not be asking students to fill additional forms. However,



colleges can collect additional data or information but that will not require extra payment," Mr. Gupta said.

Senior officials associated with the university's online admission portal said that suitable framework had been created where aspirants can check fee structures for every college and course.

The varsity's online portal will also have 24x7 helpdesks and Chatbots to assist students in clearing doubts

and queries, officials added. "The admission branch will organise webinars and tutorial videos for aspirants. These videos will have details about the registration process and assist students to fill the application forms. Interactive and AI-based questionnaires have also been developed. All colleges and departments have been asked to appoint nodal officers, details of which will be uploaded on the website,"

Senior DU officials said. Apart from 13 courses for which admissions will be through DUET (Delhi University Entrance Test), admissions to all other undergraduate courses will be based on merit, the varsity had announced earlier this month.

Cut-off marks
Following the declaration of the CBSE XII board examinations, principals of several DU colleges and officials said that an increased number of students scoring above 95% could lead to the university having soaring cut-off marks this year.

Last year, Lady Shri Ram College had an asking score of 100% for three courses - Economics, Political Science and Psychology. However, several officials also said that the cut-off marks would also depend on the number of aspirants applying to the varsity this year. Senior DU officials had also said that "better modalities" for cut-off marks would be worked out to avoid "over and under admissions."

According to the university, there are around 65,000 undergraduate seats on offer this year.

'Tiranga Yatra a plan to instigate and defame farmers'

SKM appeals to Haryana farmers not to oppose it; flag protests against BJP and JJP to continue

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) on Sunday appealed to Haryana farmers not to oppose the "Tiranga Yatra" of the State's BJP unit claiming that it was a "devious plan" to instigate and defame farmers.

The umbrella body of 40 farmer unions said in a statement that the other programmes of boycott and flag protests against the BJP and the JJP will continue.

"The proposed 'Tiranga

Yatra' of the BJP's Haryana unit is mainly to instigate farmers and defame them. SKM urged farmers to see through this devious plan of BJP, and to not let this dirty tactic, under the guise of the national flag, succeed," it said in the statement.

The Haryana BJP's two-week-long 'Tiranga Yatra' ahead of the 75th Independence Day began from Bhiwani on Sunday, with party's State chief O.P. Dhankar claiming that thousands of farmers also joined the event.

Mr. Dhankar, along with State Agriculture Minister J.P. Dalal, rode a tractor with Tricolour fixed on its both sides during the 'yatra', which was taken out on a 30-km-long route from Bahal to Loharu.

The SKM also said the 'Kisan Sansad' will continue at Jantar Mantar in Delhi on Monday.

"The Kisan Sansad, despite the site of the Sansad in Jantar Mantar being flooded with water, is functioning in a disciplined manner, with detailed deliberations. In Chhat-

tisgarh, a parallel Kisan Sansad was run by the State Kisan Sabha on Friday, in solidarity with the Kisan Sansad near the Parliament," the morcha said.

The Kisan Sansad is part of the latest strategy of the farmers who have been protesting against the Centre's three contentious farm laws at multiple Delhi borders since November last year.

The farmers have expressed fear that the new laws will eliminate the Minimum Support Price system

and leave them at the mercy of the big corporations.

Over 10 rounds of talks with the government that has been projecting the laws as major agricultural reforms have failed to break the deadlock between the two parties.

As part of these Kisan Sansad sessions, 200 farmers from the protest sites participate in a mock Parliament session at Jantar Mantar during which issues concerning the farming community were discussed.

Ration distribution picks up pace after server glitches

Shops distributed 87.8% of their target for July since ONORC scheme implementation: govt. data

NIKHIL M BABU
NEW DELHI

After a bumpy start to the roll-out of the 'One Nation One Ration Card' scheme (ONORC) in Delhi, fair price shops (FPS) have distributed 87.8% of their target for July in the last 12 days, according to government data.

Owners of fair price shops said that initially there were glitches in the online system, which the e-PoS (electronic point of sale) machines use, leading to queues at shops, but the system is working better now.

Distribution of ration started only from July 20, as the Delhi government decided to implement the ONORC scheme a day before it.

"Last week, the system was not working for a few hours for three days at a stretch leading to long queues of people waiting to get ra-



tion. However, for the past two-three days we have not faced any major problem," said Satvir Singh, 61, who runs a shop at Matia Mahal.

Mr. Singh showed a WhatsApp group, "Circle 21 Matia Mahal", in which government officials were

unable to connect the e-PoS to the online system.

Mr. Singh showed a WhatsApp group, "Circle 21 Matia Mahal", in which government officials were



Lifeline: (Right) Ration distribution using e-PoS machine at Jahangirpuri; foodgrain distribution in progress at a centre in Majlis Park in the city. •SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

FPS, also said that the issues with the system are less now.

Govt. lacks preparedness
Anjali Bhardwaj of the Delhi Rozi Roti Adhikar Abhiyaan said that the government should have learnt from its past mistakes and should have been prepared this time.

In 2018, the government had started distributing ration through e-PoS, but had to stop and go back to the manual system due to problems with the online process.

"With the pandemic, PDS [public distribution system] has become the lifeline for people. When there are disruptions in the distribution, many won't be able to feed their children," Ms. Bhardwaj said. She said that the government should have an alternative method to distribution if the online system is not working or biometrics are not being detected by the machine.

"There is an uneven burden on the vulnerable people when it comes to the e-PoS system. People who do manual labour and old people are the ones, whose biometrics do not match with the system in most cases. And they are the most vulnerable too," she added.

HC seeks CBSE stand on plea on assessment of private Class X students

Board's counsel sought 10 days' time

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has granted time to the Central Board of Secondary Education to respond to a plea concerning the methodology of assessment of private Class X students after the examination was cancelled on account of the pandemic earlier this year.

Justice Prateek Jalan, hearing a petition moved by the mother of a private Class X student, passed the order after time was sought by the counsel for the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE).

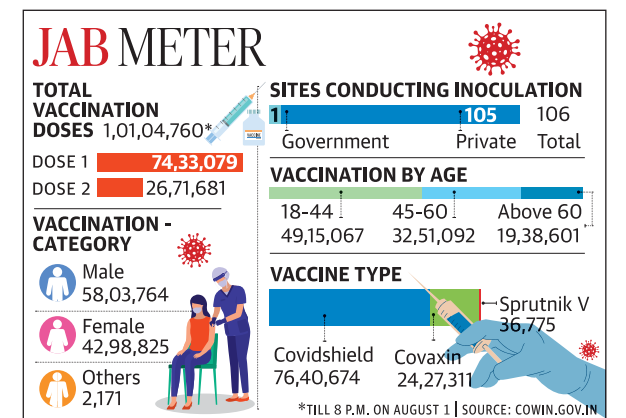
"Rupesh Kumar, learned counsel for the Central Board of Secondary Education, seeks ten days' further time to take instructions on the methodology for assessment of private candidates for the Class X examinations," the judge recorded in the order dated July 29 as he listed the

matter for further hearing on August 23.

The notice to CBSE in the petition was issued in June when the court granted six weeks' time to the education body to clarify its stand.

In her petition, Payal Bahl has submitted that while students have been declared as "pass" after the announcement of cancellation of examinations, CBSE has not issued any notification regarding its policy on how marks are to be awarded to private students.

CBSE's attitude towards the students who are privately enrolled in Class X examination is "prima facie violation of the Article 14 of the Constitution of India" and takes away "their equal opportunity of proceeding with further education", she contended. It is highlighted that CBSE has already notified that assessment of regular Class X students was to be based on internal assessment.



Capital sees 85 more COVID-19 cases, 1 death

TPR at 0.12%; active cases stand at 582

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Capital recorded 85 new COVID-19 cases and one death, according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi government on Sunday. The bulletin added that 72,447 tests have been conducted with a positivity rate of 0.12%.

There are 582 active cases in the city out of which 172 are under home isolation. The total number of cases since the pandemic began has now gone to 14,36,350 along with 25,054 deaths.

On Saturday, the city had reported 58 COVID-19 cases with a positivity rate of 0.08% and one death due to the infection.

Sharing details about the vaccination drive, the bulletin said that 83,049 people had been vaccinated in the past 24-hours out of which 20,179 got their first dose.

The total number of people vaccinated has reached 1,00,32,817 out of which 26,65,152 have received both doses.

Vaccine stock
The vaccination bulletin showed that as of August 1 morning, 3,56,130 doses of Covaxin was available as 1,18,490 doses were added to the stock on July 31. For Covidshield, 4,76,610 doses remain.

The government has 909 centres at 401 locations with a capacity to vaccinate 1,58,502 people in a day. The total number of days for which the stock remains is 5.

Rajasthan farmers turning into entrepreneurs

As many as 617 agro-projects are in the pipeline with an investment of ₹1,255 crore

MOHAMMED IQBAL
JAIPUR

Farmers growing grains and vegetables in their fields in western Rajasthan are now sorting and grading their processed agricultural products with machines. Taking advantage of subsidies, incentives and land conversion offered by government agencies during the pandemic, cultivators in the State are fast turning into entrepreneurs.

With the agro-industry setting its firm foot in non-descript rural areas, mainly in Jodhpur district, chains of warehouses, cold storage facilities and food processing units have been established on agricultural land in a big way. Despite the adverse circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, as many as 617 agro-projects are in the pipeline with an estimated investment of ₹1,255 crore.

Farmers have evinced a keen interest in setting up units for oilseeds, pulses, spices, cotton, milk and grain processing along with warehouses and cattle feed enterprises. While becoming financially self-sufficient, farmers are al-



Warehouses and food processing units established on farm land in Jodhpur's Osian tehsil. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT.

so providing employment to the village youths.

Support for entrepreneurship in the farmer community came through the State government's agro-processing, agri-business and agri-export promotion policy adopted in 2019. The ambitious scheme gives subsidy on capital investment and interest to farmers and entrepreneurs for setting up agro-processing industries and developing infrastructure.

Mohan Ram Chaudhary, who established an agro-industry at Mathania village in Jodhpur's Osian tehsil, told *The Hindu* that the de-

crease in value addition. Farmers were also getting fair prices for their produce through such units.

Shiv Ram Parihar of Balarwa village, who has set up a spice processing enterprise, said farmers could store their commodities with the creation of warehouses and get loans to meet their immediate needs without the compulsion to sell the produce immediately after harvesting.

50% grant for project

As part of the policy, farmers and their organisations are given a 50% grant, or a maximum of ₹1 crore, of the project cost, while other eligible entrepreneurs get the grant of 25%, or a maximum of ₹50 lakh. To reduce the cost of operation, farmers are given interest subvention at the rate of 6% for five years on getting term loans.

Bhaskar A. Sawant, Principal Secretary, Agriculture, said the value addition to agricultural products would directly benefit the cultivators by facilitating the sale of processed items at fair and remunerative prices.

Onion, garlic export

Woman farmer Munni Sankhla, known as a progressive cultivator in the region, has installed an onion-garlic dehydration plant in her agricultural field. Ms. Sankhla said her unit had started exporting onions and garlic, available locally in good quantity,

Bihar CM Nitish meets INLD chief O.P. Chautala

He enquires about Haryana leader's health, discusses politics

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and Janata Dal (United) general secretary K.C. Tyagi called on former Haryana Chief Minister Om Prakash Chautala at his residence here on Sunday to enquire about his health and also discussed political issues.

The lunch meeting between the three leaders was prescheduled and Mr. Chautala had announced it this past Tuesday.

Abhay's tweet

Indian National Lok Dal secretary-general and former Leader of Opposition, Abhay Singh, shared the news about the meeting between the three leaders with a tweet in Hindi and a few pictures. In one of the pictures, Mr. Kumar is seen offering a "shawl" to Mr. Chautala with the two leaders surrounded by a couple of more people. Mr. Tyagi is also seen in the picture.

Mr. Chautala, who was released from jail last month on completion of his



Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar • FILE PHOTO



Indian National Lok Dal chief Om Prakash Chautala •

10-year sentence in a corruption case, had this past Tuesday said that he would soon start meeting political leaders towards forging a 'third front'.

The octogenarian leader had said that he would try to meet leaders of all Opposition parties before September 25, the birth anniversary of former Deputy Prime Minister Devi Lal, to forge an alternative to the "corrupt BJP government at the Centre". Mr. Chautala had said that he also had plans to meet Mr. Kumar, a BJP ally.

The BJP is the ruling par-

Ex-Manipur Congress chief joins BJP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Former Manipur Congress president Govindas Konthoujam joined the BJP on Sunday, saying he was impressed with the Modi government's development work for the region.

He joined the BJP in the presence of Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh, State BJP chief A. Sharda Devi, Rajya Sabha MP Anil Baluni and the party's in-charge for the State Sambit Patra, among others.

Mr. Konthoujam later met BJP president J.P. Nadda.

"I welcome him to the party and wish him the very best for his new innings," he tweeted.

A six-time consecutively elected MLA from the Bishnupur seat, Mr. Konthoujam had quit the Congress a few days back and his decision to join the saffron party would be a boost to it ahead of the Assembly elections in the state early next year.

The Chief Minister, who was also in the Congress party before joining the BJP, called Mr. Konthoujam a friend and asserted that more leaders will be joining the party.

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Over 700 Halam people return to Tripura

They had fled after clashes with Bru refugees

SYED SAJJAD ALI
AGARTALA

Repatriation of several hundred people who had taken shelter in Assam's Karimganj district following clashes with Bru refugees in north Tripura began on Sunday. The exodus occurred last week after local indigenous residents and Mizoram Bru refugees of a makeshift camp clashed over alleged encroachment of farmland.

At least 700 people of Halam sub-tribes were displaced after rioters torched several houses at Damcherra area of north Tripura district. A number of people sustained injuries, but none was seriously hurt.

The displaced people crossed the Longai river to reach Karimganj of Assam. Karimganj district administration provided them shelter and distributed relief materials.

North Tripura district administration sent vehicles to Karimganj on Sunday to bring back the displaced people.

District officials said they have arranged temporary stay at a parapet in a school building in Damcherra before they would return to their respective hamlets.

CRPF contingents have been deployed in violence hit places and Section 144 of CrPc imposed to contain the tension. Authorities claimed that the situation has been completely normal.

Local leaders of different political parties, village elders and Bru refugee representatives extended help to restore peace and amity between ethnic groups.

TIPRA for peace
Meanwhile, Tipraha Indigenous Progressive Regional Alliance or the TIPRA, which is governing the Tribal Autonomous District Council, has called for 'peace and unity among the State's 19 tribal clans'.

BJP MP Kirori Lal Meena unfurls tribal flag, detained

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
JAIPUR

BJP MP Kirori Lal Meena was detained on Sunday after he unfurled a tribal flag on the wall of the Ambargarh Fort by hoodwinking the heavy police force deployed at the monument, a centre of dispute between the members of the Meena community and Hindutva organisations.

The white flag was unfurled at a parapet in the rear side of the fort, where the tribal leader along with around a dozen supporters reached in the early hours.

Tensions had escalated between the Meenas and Hindu organisations in June after a saffron flag atop the fort here was removed by a group of youths from the Meena community.

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Deputy Chief Engineer (Construction), Western Railway, RATLAM (MP), invites offer through E-tender portal www.reps.gov.in under one packet system for the following tender:

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The Director General (Parks & Squares), KMC invites quotation online percentage rate two bid system for the following works:

(1) NIT No.: KMC/DG(PS)/XVI/144/01/21-22

Name of the work: Maint. of Park at Diamond Park in Ward No. 144. Estimated Cost : ₹ 7,27,012.58. Earnest Money: ₹ 15,000.00. Period of completion: 30 Days.

(2) NIT No.: KMC/DG(PS)/XVI/144/009/21-22

Name of the work: Development of KMC Park at Diamond Park in Ward No. 144. Estimated Cost : ₹ 5,96,845.65. Earnest Money: ₹ 12,000.00. Period of completion: 30 Days.

(3) NIT No.: KMC/DG(PS)/XII/109/1/21-22/R (2nd call)

Name of the work: Construction of Road Side Garden with Bamboo Fencing behind Satyajit Roy Film Institute and in front of Jadavpur University Cooperative Society Complex from P159 to P172 at Panchasayar in Ward No. 109, BR-XII. Estimated Cost : ₹ 7,92,090.35. Earnest Money: ₹ 16,000.00. Period of completion: 45 Days.

Last Date and Time of Submission of Bid : 11.08.2021 at 5:00 P.M. (For Sl. No. 1-3). The Bid Forms and other details shall be available on and from 04.08.2021 at 10:00 A.M. from the website https://etender.wb.nic.in (for Sl. No. 1-3)

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IN BRIEF



Telangana announces farm loan waiver

HYDERABAD
The Telangana Cabinet decided to waive crop loans in the range of ₹25,000 to ₹50,000 this year, at a meeting chaired by Chief Minister K. Chandrababhan Nara Chandrababu Naidu on Sunday. The upper age limit for employment of economically weaker sections was increased by five years.

Naval officer drowns in waterfalls in Kerala

KOTTAYAM
Lt. Abhishek Kumar, 28, of the Southern Naval Command, drowned in the Marmala waterfalls near Teekoy in Kottayam district on Sunday. He is a native of Lucknow. He was among a group of eight Navy officers who visited the waterfalls. A sudden surge of water is said to have swept him off.

Row over Lakshadweep beach villa plan

Administration issues tender for 370 structures on beaches, lagoons despite warning from experts

S. ANANDAN
KOCHI

Ignoring what marine biologists have warned of as a serious “developmental misstep”, the Lakshadweep administration is pressing ahead with plans to construct beach and lagoon villas on three islands of the Union Territory with its fragile coral ecosystem.

A tender notice inviting proposals from developers for building 370 villas using the design, build, finance, operate and transfer (DBFOT) model on public-private partnership (PPP) basis in Minicoy, Kadmat and Suheli islands was issued by District Collector S. Asker Ali, in his capacity as managing director of the Society for Promotion of Nature Tourism and Sports (SPORTS), on July 31. September 2 is the last date for submission of proposals.



Green concerns: Scientists and researchers fear the project will destroy the fragile ecology of Lakshadweep. ■ISTOCK

A group of concerned scientists and researchers had petitioned the administration early last year detailing why the NITI Aayog-led project will be ecologically disastrous and socio-economically ill-considered.

Lagoons as insurance
“The lagoon is a vital ‘insurance site’ protecting the islands’ land and freshwater supply. Lagoon coral patches

are temperature-adapted and serve as refugia for climate-disturbed outer reefs in Lakshadweep. The planned lagoon development will destroy, permanently modify and pollute large areas of the lagoon and its ecosystems,” the petitioners said.

The beaches being cultural and ecological spaces for the islanders, the project would be detrimental to the

interests of the local community as well, they argued.

“Apart from being vital as nesting sites for several species of turtle, it is a multi-use environment for fish processing, copra processing, boat landing, fish sale, recreation and other critical social functions. Having access to the beach is critical to island life. Even beaches on uninhabited islands like Suheli are heavily used through the fair season for fish processing,” the scientists pointed out.

75-year rights

According to the tender notice and draft concession agreement, the plan is to award to the successful bidder exclusive rights over 8.54 hectares of land and 6 hectares of lagoon on Minicoy; 5.577 hectares of land and 6 hectares of lagoon on Kadmat; and 3.823 hectares of

land and 6 hectares of lagoon on Suheli island; for a period of 75 years to build and operate these villas.

The proposed built-up area for the luxury project in Minicoy will be 13,702.5 sq metres on land (110 beach villas) and 5,020 sq metre (40 floating villas) on the lagoon; in Kadmat it will be 10,823 sq metre area on land (75 beach villas) and 4,500 sq metre (35 floating villas) on water; and in Suheli 9,945 sq metre on land (60 beach villas) and 6,300 sq metre (50 floating villas) on water.

The project is estimated to cost about ₹806 crore.

While there was earlier talk of 80% of employment in the project going to the local community, the documents only mention in passing that the “concessionaire shall make necessary efforts to employ locals to the extent possible”.

Visitors to Karnataka hit by new norms

Many without RT-PCR report refused entry

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BELAGAVI/ MYSURU/ BENGALURU

The enforcement of the Karnataka government’s new COVID-19 guidelines requiring a negative RT-PCR report for travellers from Kerala and Maharashtra, resulted in confusion at the inter-State checkpoints, particularly along the border with Maharashtra, leading to traffic snarls. The revised guidelines were issued in the wake of a surge in cases in the neighbouring States.

The new guidelines, announced on Friday night, mandate that travellers to the State must have an RT-PCR negative report con-



Chaos reigns: People queuing up at the Attibele checkpoint in Bengaluru on Sunday. ■MURALI KUMAR K.

ducted within the previous 72 hours unlike the earlier option of producing a vaccination certificate for entry.

The police and health workers at the inter-State checkpoints refused entry to vehicles carrying passengers without the required RT-PCR negative reports. The move caused chaos as several tra-

vellers were not aware of the new norm. Even those having COVID-19 negative report found it difficult to enter the State from Maharashtra as a long queue of vehicles delayed the process of checking their reports.

Sahil Sheikh, a regular traveller between Maharashtra and Karnataka, remarked: “I

have to shuttle three times a week. How can I keep getting tested twice a week?”

Belgavi Deputy Commissioner M.G. Hiremath and Superintendent of Police Lakshman Nimbaragi visited the Kuganoli check post on Sunday to take stock of the situation. He told *The Hindu* that the system would be streamlined in a few days.

A similar situation prevailed along the border with Kerala.

At the Attibele check post near Bengaluru, bordering Tamil Nadu, officials screened vehicles bearing registration numbers of Kerala and Maharashtra which were coming from both Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Travellers without a negative RT-PCR reports were refused entry.

Court asks SBI to pay ₹215 cr. GST to A.P. govt.

‘Bank can move appellate forum’

STAFF REPORTER
VIJAYAWADA

A Division Bench of the Andhra Pradesh High Court refused to entertain a writ petition filed by the State Bank of India (SBI) against an obligation to pay ₹215.11 crore towards GST to the Andhra Pradesh government on an exempted turnover and directed it to seek an alternative remedy from the appellate forum concerned.

The SBI had filed the petition challenging an order of assessment issued by the Deputy Commissioner of State Tax (Audit, No.1 Division, Vijayawada), wherein the bank was held liable to

pay GST to the tune of ₹215,10,75,375.

The bank had primarily contended that it was not liable to pay any tax since it was not rendering any service while levying penal interest on defaulters.

The Commercial Taxes department relied on the agreements SBI entered into with various borrowers and determined that the levy of penal interest was actually an act of forbearance and a service for which the bank was charging amounts and hence was liable to pay GST.

Y.N. Vivekananda, government pleader, argued that the SBI was liable to pay the State tax.

Poultry industry urges Centre to allow import of GM soy seeds

‘Farmers battered by pandemic and rising raw material costs’

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE
PUNE

After facing crushing losses for the last 18 months due to the pandemic, the poultry industry is demanding that the Union government permit the import of crushed genetically-modified (GM) soy seeds for captive consumption of farmers.

With the sector bedevilled by increasing production costs, misinformation regarding the link between poultry and avian flu outbreaks, COVID-19-induced restrictions and natural calamities, skyrocketing prices of raw materials like soybean (that constitutes 25% of poultry feed) and maize (that constitutes 60%) in the last one year have only compounded the woes of the poultry farmers.

“The outbreak of COVID-19 has created a massive crisis that led to an initial depletion of demand in chicken products due to false news about the link between the virus and poultry products. This created an unwarranted financial crisis and led to the erosion of working capital. For the last several months, high speculation activities in soya contracts on NCDEX has

been disturbing the sector,” said C. Vasanthkumar, president, Poultry Farmers and Breeders Association, Maharashtra.

Relief measures

The association urged the Union and the State government for non-fiscal and fiscal relief measures, including the restructuring of term loans and additional working capital.

“We urge the governments to reschedule outstanding term loans by providing an extended time (6-12 months) for liquidation of loans to prevent the farmers from turning into non-performing assets. Considering the scale of financial losses, we request governments to grant interest subvention of at least 4% for three years and additional working capital loans to meet the increased production costs,” Mr. Vasanthkumar said.

The most important non-fiscal is for the government to allow import of crushed GM soy seeds for captive consumption of end users, poultry farmers.

“Given the ratcheting prices of soybean, we request the government to allow the im-

port of crushed GM seed at least for the particular time frame to stabilise raw material market,” he said.

Rising prices

He said that the rise in soybean process had led to the skyrocketing of prices of eggs and chicken products in the retail market.

“Chicken and eggs are the only cheapest non-vegetarian protein sources available in the market. But, owing to the increased raw material prices, retail chicken prices are rising at a whopping rate with chicken being sold at ₹250-₹300 per kg in the retail market. This could lead to an inflation in food prices in the country amid the pandemic.”

The sector has endured losses of more than ₹700 crore in Maharashtra alone since the eruption of the pandemic in March last year.

“We had a similar situation in 2006 when there was a first outbreak of avian influenza. During that time, the government of India had announced interest subventions and increased the credit duration to the poultry farming for the limited period,” Mr. Vasanthkumar said.

Language of intimidation won’t be tolerated: CM

He asks beneficiaries of chawls redevelopment project not to fall prey to allurements

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

In a veiled attack on the BJP, Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Sunday said the language of intimidation would not be tolerated and a befitting reply would be given to those speaking it.

He made the statement in the wake of BJP legislator Prasad Lad’s reported remarks that if needed, the Shiv Sena Bhavan, the headquarters of Thackeray-led party in central Mumbai, would be demolished. However, he later retracted the remarks and expressed regret saying they were presented out of context by the media.

Speaking at the inauguration of the BDD Chawls redevelopment project here, Mr. Thackeray referred to his



Process begins: Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray during the foundation stone laying ceremony for the redevelopment of BDD Chawls in Worli, Mumbai, on Sunday. ■EMMANUEL YOGINI

three-party Maha Vikas Aghadi dispensation as a “triple seat” government (with the NCP and the Congress being the other constituents).

Recalling a dialogue from Hindi blockbuster “Da-

bangg” – “Thappad se dar nahi lagta (not scared of being slapped)” – the Chief Minister said, “Nobody should speak the language of slapping us as we will give back such a tight slap that the oth-

er person will not be able to get back on his feet.”

Asking the beneficiaries of the chawls redevelopment project not to fall prey to allurements once the project gets over, he said, “Marathi culture must be protected in the redeveloped constructions at any cost as the chawls had a historic legacy, where revolutionaries had laid down their lives and also were witness to the Samyukt Maharashtra movement.”

NCP chief Sharad Pawar, who was also present at the event, said the legacy of BDD Chawls should be protected and the Marathi-speaking people must stay back in the redeveloped houses, which would be given as part of the project being overseen by the Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Authority.

Raigad landslide: plan to resettle families ready, says Minister

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
THANE

A plan to resettle 60 families affected by the devastating July 22 landslide in Taliye in Raigad’s Mahad taluka, which killed over 80, is ready, Maharashtra Urban Development Minister Eknath Shinde said on Sunday.

Mr. Shinde, who is lead-

ing a team from Thane district for relief work following several rain-related incidents in the area, also said ₹50 lakh would be given for the repair of the Mahad sessions court building where floodwater entered.

He said villagers had demanded rehabilitation of five hamlets.

Man killed in tiger attack in Chandrapur

This is 29th man-animal conflict incident reported this year

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHANDRAPUR

A 68-year-old farmer was killed by a tiger in Brahmapur tehsil in Maharashtra’s Chandrapur district, a forest official said on Sunday.

The incident occurred in Padmapur village, some 130 kilometres from the district headquarters, on Saturday

evening when Hiranman Kotgale was working on stopping outflow of water from his field, N.R. Praveen, Chief Conservator of Forests, Chandrapur circle, said.

“After he did not return home till late evening, his family alerted forest staff who mounted a search and found the body in the bush-

es. He was attacked by a tiger. The kin has been given compensation of ₹20,000,” he said.

This is the 29th man-animal conflict incident reported from the district this year, with 25 people being killed in tiger attacks, three by leopards and one by an elephant, he said.

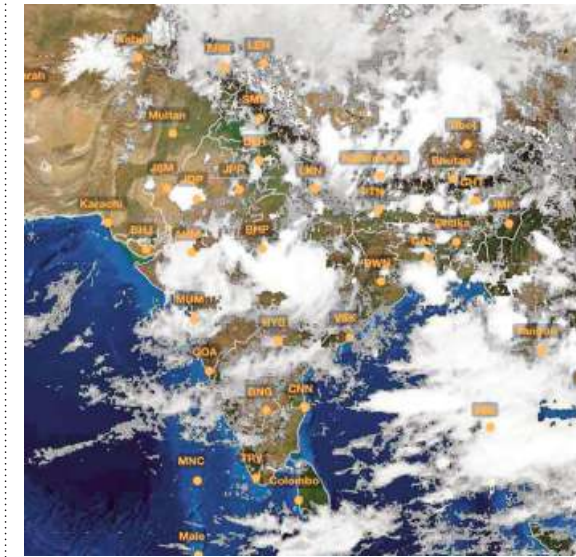
Excess rainfall in Satara, Parbhani

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

The IMD on Sunday said that Satara and Parbhani districts had received 70% more rainfall than normal till July 31 this year. Nandurbar district had recorded less than average rainfall till now, H.S. Hosalkar, senior scientist at the IMD, Pune, said in a tweet.

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Monday: Heavy to very heavy rainfall at isolated places over Uttarakhand, west Uttar Pradesh, east Madhya Pradesh and sub-Himalayan West Bengal and heavy rainfall at isolated places over Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Delhi, west Rajasthan, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Bihar and Assam

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	5	33.2	25.3	Kozhikode	4	31.8	25
Ahmedabad	0	31.4	25.3	Kurnool	—	33.8	24.3
Aizawl	—	—	—	Lucknow	35	30.2	25.5
Allahabad	—	27.1	25.8	Madurai	—	38.2	26.4
Bengaluru	—	27.5	20	Mangaluru	2.4	29.2	24.2
Bhopal	4.6	25.2	23	Mysuru	0.4	30.4	26.4
Bhubaneswar	0.5	33.8	25.4	New Delhi	—	29.8	20.6
Chandigarh	—	34.9	27.7	Patna	—	35	26.4
Chennai	11	34.8	24.4	Port Blair	—	30.8	23.9
Coimbatore	—	32.9	22.6	Puducherry	0.6	35.5	24.9
Dehradun	0.6	30.2	24.9	Raipur	—	28.7	21.8
Gangtok	1.3	22.6	18.6	Rajpur	—	28.8	25
Goa	1.3	30.4	25	Ranchi	—	27.8	23.3
Guwahati	0.8	33.2	26.1	Shillong	0.7	23.3	18.1
Hubballi	—	27	21	Shimla	—	23.9	18.6
Hyderabad	—	29.9	22.8	Srinagar	—	29.2	19.5
Imphal	51	30.3	21.2	Thiruvananthapuram	—	31.1	23.5
Jaipur	62	33.2	24.4	Tiruchi	—	36.7	28.4
Kochi	5	30.2	25	Vijayawada	—	—	—
Kolkata	51.1	27.5	21.1	Visakhapatnam	—	38	27.8
Kolkata	—	33.8	27.1				

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO ₂	NO ₂	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	22	44	24	61	86	■
Bengaluru	10	22	25	169	108	■
Chennai	12	13	33	12	72	■
Delhi	4	15	86	52	150	■
Hyderabad	1	68	15	13	28	■
Kolkata	11	27	22	51	69	■
Lucknow	18	14	84	60	66	■
Mumbai	67	10	—	63	103	■
Pune	22	11	108	74	66	■
Visakhapatnam	13	44	29	40	87	■

Air Quality Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO₂: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO₂: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

WEST

Man falls into tank at work site, injured

THANE
A construction worker was injured after he fell into a tank in Thane city around 1.45 a.m. on Sunday, regional disaster management cell chief Santosh Kadam said. The tank was uncovered and unprotected, Mr. Kadam said. He added that the man, identified as Ganesh Nirmal, was rescued by fire brigade personnel and hospitalised.

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PUBLICATION - DEMAND NOTICE

Notice under Section 13(2) of The Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 - Sent on 21-06-2021 by Registered Post with Acknowledgement Due and the same was returned by Mrs. Shahida Suhail. Hence this (No.1) Mrs. Shahida Suhail, W/o. Late Sohail Iqbal (In personal capacity as well as the only Legal Heir of Late. Mohd Umer) at S-12, DLF 2nd Dilshad Extension, Sahibabad Ghaziabad, U.P. - 201005.

Dear Sir/Madam

Sub: Loan account / Overdraft with City Union Bank Limited, New Delhi - Laxmi Nagar Branch in the name of Mrs. Shahida Suhail.

The Bank issued notice under the SARFAESI Act on 21-06-2021 calling upon all of you to repay the outstanding amount of Rs.18,59,792/- (Rupees Eighteen Lakh Fifty Nine Thousand Seven Hundred and Ninety Two Only) as on 03-06-2021 with further interest for 501812080052580 (LOAN AGAINST PROPERTY) at 11.75% plus 2.00% penal interest p.a. (not compounded) with monthly rests from 04-06-2021 till the date of repayment. The notice sent to you by Registered Post have been returned by all.

Therefore, we hereby once again call upon you all to pay Rs.18,59,792/- (Rupees Eighteen Lakh Fifty Nine Thousand Seven Hundred and Ninety Two Only) with further interest for 501812080052580 (LOAN AGAINST PROPERTY) at 11.75% plus 2.00% penal interest p.a. (not compounded) with monthly rests from 04-06-2021 till the date of repayment within 60 days from the date of this notice failing which Bank will be constrained to exercise its rights of enforcement of security interest against the secured assets given in the schedule hereunder. This Notice is published/issued without prejudice to any other right / remedy available to the Bank.

Immovable Property Mortgaged to our Bank (Property Owned by Late. Mohd Umer)

Flat No. S.T - 1, on Second Floor (Front Side) measuring 750 Sq.ft. without Roof Rights, constructed on Plot No.S-12, situated at DLF Bhopura, Pargana Loni, Tehsil and District Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh. Bounded as Under: South - Entrance of the said Flat/Common Staircase/other Flat No.ST-2 and ST-3 on backside in the same building. North - Road 30 ft. (below). West - Property No.S-13, East - Property No.S-11.

Place: Kumbakonam, Date : 29-07-2021 Authorised Officer

Regd. Office : 149, T.S.R. (Big) Street, Kumbakonam, Thanjavur District, Tamil Nadu - 612 001. CIN - L65110T1904PLC001287, Telephone No. 0435-2402322. Fax : 0435-2431746. Website : www.cityunionbank.com



Long overdue

OBC reservation in All-India Quota medical seats puts an end to a discriminatory policy

Reservation for students from Backward Classes in seats surrendered by States to an 'All-India Quota' (AIQ) in medical colleges run by State governments was long overdue. The Centre's decision to extend its 27% reservation for 'other backward classes' to all seats under the AIQ is a belated, but welcome development, as Other Backward Class (OBC) candidates have been denied their due for years. And in concord with its keenness to balance OBC interests with those of the socially advanced sections, the Union government has also decided to provide 10% of the AIQ seats to those from the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS). This is almost entirely the outcome of a Madras High Court verdict and the efforts of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, which approached the court with the demand. The AIQ is a category created by the Supreme Court to free up some seats from residential or domicile requirements in some States for admissions to their medical colleges. Introduced in 1986, the AIQ comprised 15% of undergraduate medical and dental seats and 50% of post-graduate seats surrendered by the States for admission through a central pool. There was no reservation in the AIQ, and, once in the past, the Supreme Court set aside a Madras High Court order directing the Centre to implement Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes quota in the category.

In 2007, the Supreme Court allowed 15% Scheduled Caste reservation and a 7.5% Scheduled Tribe quota under the AIQ. Meanwhile, based on a central law favouring Backward Class reservation in educational institutions, the Union's 27% OBC quota was introduced in central educational institutions. There was no move to implement OBC reservation in the category. In the courts, the Medical Council of India argued against OBC reservation, but the Union government said it was not averse to the reservation, subject to an overall 50% limit. The omission of OBC reservation in the AIQ seats was obviously discriminatory. There were OBC seats in medical institutions run by the Centre, as well as State-specific quotas in those run by the States. It was incongruous that seats given up by the States to help the Centre redistribute medical education opportunities across the country were kept out of the ambit of affirmative action. There was even a case to argue that, as AIQ seats originally belonged to the States, the quota policy applicable to the respective States ought to be applied to them. The Madras High Court, in July 2020, held that there was no legal impediment to OBC reservation, but, given that the policy varied from State to State, it left it to the Centre to decide the modalities for quotas from this academic year. The Centre has now decided on the 27% OBC quota, but not before the High Court termed the delay in doing so "contumacious".

Elusive gold

India is still searching for a gold medal as the Olympic Games enter the second week

India at the Olympics has always been about feverish hopes, bruising anguish and a few medals. Since its debut at the Games in 1900, the world's second most populous nation has ended up with either a single-digit tally or none at all. That familiar tale is being repeated a week after the Tokyo Olympics commenced and India is currently assured of three medals. One, a silver claimed by weight-lifter Mirabai Chanu in the 49kg category. And second, a minimum of a bronze guaranteed as boxer Lovlina Borgohain qualified for the semifinal in the welter-weight segment. The bout will be held on Wednesday. Badminton star P.V. Sindhu too joined the party, seizing her bronze after defeating China's He Bingjiao 21-13, 21-15 during Sunday's third-place play-off. Through their exploits Mirabai and Lovlina, hailing from Manipur and Assam, respectively, have revealed the rich sporting ability shimmering in the North-eastern States linked to the mainland through the chicken's neck above Bangladesh. Mirabai and Lovlina owe their triumphs to their innate strength and hard work besides the obvious support from family and the Sports Authority of India. With Sindhu, they have also reiterated women-power. Sindhu, who won the silver at the previous Olympics at Rio de Janeiro, had an exceptional run till she ran into Chinese Taipei's Tai Tzu-Ying in the semifinal and then made amends with a bronze.

India had a moment to savour when its women's hockey team entered the quarterfinals. While a strong Australian outfit awaits in the knockout on Monday, the women will add to India's evergreen hockey-hopes that gained a fillip after the men defeated Great Britain 3-1 during Sunday's quarterfinal. After the 1980 gold, the men's quest to win another Olympic medal has gained impetus and the road ahead is tough but interesting. In the limited chronicle of good tidings, Kamalpreet Kaur's excellent throw of 64 metres in the discus throw event was a spark. Kamalpreet qualified for Monday's final and a lot is resting on her shoulders. While these stirring events kept India afloat, there is also the litany of heart-breaks that included Mary Kom's loss in boxing, a fact the 38-year-old failed to initially admit following her adrenaline rush. The travails in shooting and archery did not add up to the original template of good form and resultant expectations. Shooters Saurabh Chaudhary and Manu Bhaker had their moments but they were not enough. The Games exert immense pressure as it is always about the athlete combining individual excellence with national pride. Tennis champion Novak Djokovic failed to even win a bronze while gymnast Simone Biles withdrew from events citing mental fatigue. It is never easy and the Indian contingent would vouch for that going into the second week.

The draw of space and nuclear technologies

It remains to be seen whether the new ventures of Jeff Bezos and Bill Gates will strike a chord and benefit mankind



T.P. SREENIVASAN

Even as billionaire Jeff Bezos was preparing to blast off into space last month, another billionaire, Bill Gates, took an equally momentous decision to launch his own nuclear reactor with an eye on the possibility of exporting fast breeder reactors to power hungry nations (<https://reut.rs/3y1fSgW>). Both of them characterised their initiatives as essentially aimed at the environment to reverse climate change. Answering criticism on his expensive and wasteful adventure, Bezos insisted that he had an environmental vision: "We need to take all heavy industry, all polluting industry and move it into space, and keep Earth as this beautiful gem of a planet that it is," he said. Mr. Gates stressed the importance of nuclear power as the clean energy required to meet the requirements of the world, even though the safety of nuclear reactors and the risk of proliferation of nuclear weapons are a growing concern.

The future of atomic energy

Back in 2007-08, the then Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mohamed ElBaradei, had established a Committee of Eminent Persons to look at the future of nuclear power in 2020 and beyond. As an Executive Director of the Commission, I had helped to produce a report, which asserted that "the international community has both auspicious opportunities and significant challenges to tackle as the world moves into its seventh nuclear decade. Expanded use of nuclear technologies offered immense potential to meet important development needs. In fact, to satisfy energy demands and to mitigate the threat of cli-

mate change — two of the 21st century's greatest challenges — there are major opportunities for expansion of nuclear energy". The report predicted that a "nuclear renaissance" will solve not only the world's energy problems, but also alleviate climate change.

Fukushima and after

But the expectation was short-lived because the Fukushima Daiichi accident in Japan on March 11, 2011 completely transformed the nuclear power situation beyond recognition and dealt a blow to plans for swiftly scaling up nuclear power to address not only climate change but also energy poverty and economic development. An IAEA article, "Nuclear power 10 years after Fukushima: the long road back", says, as the global community turned its attention to strengthening nuclear safety, several countries opted to phase out nuclear power. The nuclear industry was at a standstill except in Russia, China and India. Even in India, the expected installation of imported reactors did not materialise because of our liability law and the anti-nuclear protests in proposed locations. India had to go in for more indigenous reactors to increase the nuclear component of its energy mix. More than 50 nations, which were knocking at the door of the IAEA for nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, quietly withdrew their requests.

After intensive efforts to strengthen nuclear safety, as said in this article, and with global warming becoming ever more apparent, nuclear power is regaining a place in global debates as a climate-friendly energy option once again. Countries such as Japan and Germany reopened their reactors to produce energy. But even as organisations such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the International Energy Agency (IEA) recognise the ability of nuclear power to address major global challenges, it remains uncertain whether the value of this clean, reliable and sustainable



source of energy will achieve its full potential any time soon.

The Fukushima Daiichi accident, adds the article, continues to cast a shadow over the prospects of nuclear power. Furthermore, in some major markets, nuclear power lacks a favourable policy and financing framework that recognise its contributions to climate change mitigation and sustainable development. Without such a framework, nuclear power will struggle to deliver on its full potential, even as the world remains as dependent on fossil fuels as it was three decades ago.

The Gates plan

Even when the uncertainty continues and the anti-nuclear lobby is gaining momentum, TerraPower, the nuclear company founded by Mr. Gates, has just announced an agreement with private funders, including Warren Buffett, and the State of Wyoming, U.S. to site its Natrium fast reactor demonstration project there. Moreover, since it falls within the "advanced" small modular reactor project of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), the Department will subsidise the project of one of the richest men in the world to the extent of \$80 million this year.

As an article by the non-proliferation sentinels in the U.S., Henry Sokolski and Victor Gilinsky, titled "Bill Gates' Fast Nuclear Reactor: Will It Bomb?" (<https://bit.ly/3fjMITc>) says, Mr. Gates believes that the fast breeder reactors will replace the current reactors. The DOE and other nuclear

enthusiasts also believe that small, factory-built, modular reactors will be cheaper and safer, and will be so attractive to foreign buyers that they will revive America's nuclear industry and enable the United States to compete in an international market now dominated by China and Russia. Another benefit envisaged is that fast breeder reactors will provide a solid nuclear industrial base for meeting U.S. military nuclear requirements. DOE has found bipartisan Congressional support for funding the project.

Mr. Sokolski and Mr. Gilinsky have challenged the move on several grounds such as the failure of earlier efforts to develop such reactors, and the risk of the turning of inert uranium to plutonium, and then using the plutonium as fuel. They have argued in their article that it can even "breed" excess plutonium to fuel new fast reactors. What concerns them most is that plutonium is a nuclear explosive which can be used for developing a bomb. They are afraid that the availability of plutonium through commercial channels would be fraught with dangers.

As their article says, TerraPower announced in March that Natrium would be fuelled with uranium enriched to 20% U-235 rather than explosive plutonium. But the question being asked is if Natrium reactor takes off and is offered for export, will the same restraint apply. Currently, only a handful of nations can make 20% enriched uranium. The critics believe that there will be a rush to make 20% enriched uranium world wide. The main objection to nuclear enrichment beyond a point in Iran arises from the fact that it would lead to weapon grade uranium being available for them.

The other objection being raised against the Gates project, as cited in the article, is that the principal reason for preferring fast reactors is to gain the ability to breed plutonium. That is surely what foreign customers will want. The way it is configured, the reac-

tor would make and reuse massive quantities of material that could also be used as nuclear explosives in warheads.

Focus on India and China

India's fast breeder reactor, which is not subject to international inspections, is seen as capable of feeding the nuclear weapons capability of India. And the recent reports that China is building two more fast reactors have immediately provoked international concerns about China's possible weapons plutonium production. The opponents of TerraPower believe that India and China will be encouraged in their efforts to develop fast breeder reactors and may even want to buy them from Mr. Gates. They also think that the characterisation of TerraPower as small is a gimmick and they will have to be made big to make them economical. The claim that fast reactors are safer than light water reactors has also been called into question.

It has been pointed out that U.S. Presidents Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter made it U.S. policy to discourage the commercialising of plutonium-fuelled reactors. President Ford had announced that the U.S. would not support reliance on plutonium fuel and associated reprocessing of spent fuel until "the world community can effectively overcome the associated risks of proliferation." (<https://bit.ly/3fii7IN>). The critics do not think that the world has reached such a stage.

No one can predict whether the space adventure of Mr. Bezos or the nuclear venture of Mr. Gates will benefit the U.S. and the wider world. But billionaires have the sixth sense to know how to multiply their own billions.

T.P. Sreenivasan is a former Ambassador of India and Governor for India of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). He is also Chairman, Academic Council, the Director, NSS Academy of Civil Services and the Director General, Kerala International Centre

A cycle of low growth, higher inflation

Unless policy action ensures higher demand and growth, India will continue on the path of a K-shaped recovery



ANAND SRINIVASAN

In recent times, right-leaning economists have been arguing that the Government does not need to do anything with the economy and that it will revive by itself. They call those who disagree with them, doomsday merchants. These economists reason that, like after the Great Depression, the economy rebounded worldwide, and so will it with us. The argument is fallacious on four accounts:

The first factor, demand. In the case of the Great Depression, demand was created by the Second World War effort. Especially in the United States, which was largely spared of the destruction, its industrial capabilities could be used as a supply base for the entire Allied effort. In the current scenario, there is no war to create demand. On top of it, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in demand destruction. This is because many jobs have been lost, and even where jobs were retained, there have been pay cuts. Both of these trends were confirmed in the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy and other surveys. The only bright spot in this dismal scenario is that the western world has spent a lot of money stimulating the economy. From the point of view of the Indian exporter, rising freight costs and non-availability of containers is a significant impediment along with structural issues such as a strong rupee relative to major

competitors. Only the Indian IT sector is placed well to capitalise on rising demand in the world markets.

Next is inflation. India is suffering from stagnant growth to low growth in the last two quarters. At best, any growth in the current quarter will be illusory because it comes on top of substantial negative growth in the first quarter of last year, perpetuating a statistical phenomenon known as the "low base effect". The base effect states that when measuring YoY, or year-over-year growth, we take the previous year's numbers as the base and measure the growth as a percentage. As in the low initial base set by last year, almost any growth this year is seen as a significant growth percentage. In comparison, the absolute growth figure is negligible. This scenario is eerily similar to the early 1970s in the United Kingdom and the United States, where low growth was combined with rising inflation.

Causes in India

Inflation in India is being imported through a combination of high commodity prices and high asset price inflation caused by ultra-loose monetary policy followed across the globe. Foreign portfolio investors have directed a portion of the liquidity towards our markets. Compared to a developed capital market such as that of the U.S., India has a relatively low market capitalisation. It, therefore, cannot absorb the enormous capital inflow without asset prices inflating. This might be seen as a welcome move, but it is to be noted that most of India's population do not own equity or bonds, which means that they cannot cash in on asset inflation. The



wealthy upper class gets richer due to access to financial assets. The middle and lower-middle-class get destitute due to regressive indirect taxes and high inflation, with their wealth eroding due to said inflation. Especially in the case of the lower middle class, inflation is lethal as they do not have access to any hard assets, including the most fundamental hard asset, gold.

Fuel prices

Additionally, supply chain bottlenecks have contributed to the inflation we see in India today. Essential goods have increased in cost due to scarce supply because of these bottlenecks caused by COVID-19 and its reactionary measures enforced. India's usurious taxation policy on fuel has made things worse. Rising fuel prices percolate into the economy by increasing costs for transport. Furthermore, the increase in fuel prices will also lead to a rise in wages demanded as the monthly expense of the general public increases. This leads to the dangerous cycle of inflation and depleting growth.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has chosen to look the other way, claiming that this inflation is transitory in nature while inflationary expenses are entrenched. Inflation is here to stay because the RBI

is infusing massive liquidity into the system by following an expansionary monetary policy through the G-SAP, or Government Securities Acquisition Programme. This is designed to keep the interest rates of government bonds at 6.0% and thereabouts. An added threat of rising rates is the crowding out of the private sector, which corporates are threatening to do by deleveraging their balance sheets and not investing.

The third is interest rates. The only solution for any central banker once he realises that inflation is entrenched is tightening liquidity and further pushing the cost of money. If this does not dampen inflation, repo rates will need to go up later this year or early next year. Tightening the money supply is a painful act that will threaten to decimate what is left of our economy. Rising interest rates lead to a decrease in aggregate demand in a country, which affects the GDP. There is less spending by consumers and investments by corporates.

On NPAs

Finally, rising non performing assets, or NPAs. Rising interest rates, lack of liquidity, and offering credit to leveraged companies instead of direct subsidies to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to counter the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects will result in NPAs of public sector banks climbing faster. Our small and medium scale sector is facing a Minsky moment. The Minsky moment, coined by the economist Hyman Minsky, states that every credit cycle has three distinct stages. The first stage is that of cautious lending

and risk aversion by the bankers. The second stage is lending to trustworthy debtors who can pay the principal and its interest. The third stage is a state of euphoria caused by rising asset prices where bankers lend to debtors regardless of their ability to pay back interest, let alone the principal.

Minsky moment

The Minsky moment marks the decline of asset prices, causing mass panic and the inability of debtors to pay their interest and principal. India has reached its Minsky moment. This means that the public sector unit and several other banks will need capital in copious amounts to make up for bad debt. Several banks and financial institutions have collapsed in the last 18 months in India. The Union government's Budget is in no position to infuse large amounts of capital. At best, we can expect a piecemeal effort as in the past seven years. As a result of the above causes, credit growth is at a multi-year low of 5.6%. Banks do not want to risk any more loans on their books. This will further dampen demand for real estate and automobiles once the pent-up demand is over. The Indian economy is in a vicious cycle of low growth and higher inflation unless policy action ensures higher demand and growth. In the absence of policy interventions, India will continue on the path of a K-shaped recovery where large corporates with low debt will prosper at the cost of small and medium sectors. This means lower employment as most of the jobs are created by the latter.

Anand Srinivasan is a financial consultant

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

Border tensions

The muddling match between Assam and Mizoram militates against the interests of the States concerned as, after all, it is not the Line of Actual Control (Page 1, "Assam CM wants neutral probe into border clash", August 1). Rather than sink their differences in the larger interest of citizens, leaders on both sides appear to be eager to keep the border

cauldron simmering. Both leaders ought not to view the situation from the prism of Assam versus Mizoram but keep in mind that they need to show more allegiance towards the country. Their puerile actions are doing a great disservice to the nation.

DEEPAK SINGHAL,
Noida, Uttar Pradesh

■ What has transpired along the Assam-Mizoram border is

nothing short of a national shame and is an unprecedented event in the history of independent India. Establishing peace in the North-east has been a hard-earned effort. After decades of insurgencies and political instability, the region has slowly begun to bury the ghosts of the past and adopt development as the new mantra and contribute to nation building. Issues such as

territorial disputes which can result in animosity among indigenous communities will only help derail all peace building efforts and hinder development in the region. Assam, as a responsible State, must play the bigger role in resolving the boundary disputes through consensus, compromises and confidence building.

HIMANGKA KAUSHIK,
Guwahati, Assam

Tokyo exit

It is unfortunate that Mary Kom's exit from the Tokyo Olympic Games ended on a sour note. Perhaps, that is what sports is all about — win some, lose some, but take the result in perspective. What was surprising was her presumption; there is a subtle difference between confidence and overconfidence.

BALASUBRAMANIAM PAVANI,
Secunderabad

■ Novak Djokovic's behaviour during his bronze medal match loss in the Olympics has left even his die-hard admirers of his playing skills in shame. One cannot keep winning continuously. Remaining graceful even when things do not pan out as expected is a key part of one's celebrity status.

V. LAKSHMANAN,
Tirupur, Tamil Nadu

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Pegasus, a blemish on democracy

The hour has come to oppose excessive oppression through serious political action



SHELLEY WALLIA

Pegasus, the mythical winged horse from Greek mythology, is known to have allowed Bellerophon, the Corinthian hero, to ride him in order to defeat the monstrous Chimera before flying off to the heavens where he was turned by Zeus into an eponymous constellation. He has now returned to earth in the guise of a malware designed to fight terrorism, criminality and national insecurity. Though interpreted as an allegory of soul's immortality in modern times, Pegasus becomes a symbol of poetic inspiration, only to be turned into a reprehensible cyber weapon in the hands of dictators and bigots with the purpose of putting down dissent and killing critical thought. The constellation still glows in the heavens, but no longer evokes the age-old mythical sensations for humanity.

Where science has brought us

How science has aided in the inadvertent political game of demolishing basic human rights has finally fructified in the production of a technology that infiltrates human privacy right up to the bedrooms of its targets. When C.P. Snow walked into the Senate House at Cambridge in 1959 to deliver his Rede lecture, 'The Two Cultures', he sparked a global debate that would put a nail in the coffin of humanities, giving a boost to the study of science for the advancement of humanity. The two distinct cultures that emerged led to the confrontation between the technocrats and 'literary intellectuals'. While the former stood in favour of social reform and progress through technology and industry, the latter, who Snow disparagingly called "natural Luddites", had insignificant consideration for progress through industrialisation. We now know where science has finally brought us. The shadowing of our every move in a cyber-savvy world has resulted in escalating military and police repression. Mounting security concerns have been met with mounting technological responses. It is a world ridden with tensions between security and



freedom, secrecy and transparency. Democratic structures along with fundamental liberties stand eroded in the face of unrestrained free market economics that exists only to direct every facet of life. This is a system of the Panopticon, an architectural edifice where the warden in a central tower can monitor the prisoners in their cells without the prisoners seeing the warden.

The use of Pegasus, therefore, poses a stark danger to democracy and freedom, particularly in 10 governments believed to be the customers of NSO Group: Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Morocco, Rwanda, Hungary, India and the UAE, all believed to have a dismal record in the protection of human rights. The obsession with power through surveillance has brought in its wake not just the blitzkrieg of information, but also given rise to political systems that aim at behaviour control, destroying the sanctity of the individual's privacy and thereby threatening democracies with serious consequences. We are caught in a world where the harsh reality of power and its exercise takes predominance over the constitutionally guaranteed right of self-determination and freedom of expression. The central motive, however, remains political domination through the control of any dissent or ideological variance with the state.

The security agencies of democracies and dictatorships are engaged in gathering the phone 'data' of citizens who show any signs of opposition, heaping it all away for any contingency that might arise in the future. Working against all norms of jurisprudence, the national security state remains 'legitimately' above board, blatantly pursuing acts of social con-

trol through surveillance on the basis of national security. The new metamorphosed role of Pegasus has finally become the terror of a devastating hacking scandal, a means of punishing people and threatening to drown the world of freedom.

This is at the heart of the contemporary debate on the use of Pegasus, a battle between the totalitarian state and dissidence. In such circumstances, living in confrontation with the state apparatus is tantamount to being labelled as "anti-national". There are many incarcerated without a trial for years. True to the concept of fascism, the interrogation of state policy becomes a betrayal in the Orwellian sense, where free thought and debate are an anathema.

The utopia promised by the government of Oceania in George Orwell's 1984 is an illustration of the logic of totalitarianism. Such an over-organised system represents the purging of history and free human thought for the smooth and peaceful running of the state apparatus. Criticism is not permitted by a management that has at its disposal highly developed surveillance technology, the 'thought police' that incarcerates or eliminates any 'thought criminal'.

As Hannah Arendt argues, the state ensures not just the transformation of the outside world but also the very dysfunctionality of the unpredictable nature of human creativity and its spontaneity. In Orwell's novel, O'Brien, an agent of the thought police, owing complete allegiance to the Party, explains to Winston, the central character, the unending process of persecution that can appease the ruling class so as to give it an assurance of its immortality. The state manipulates the rebirth of Winston, turning his rebellious self into a

faceless believer. Similarly, in his classic, *Brave New World*, Aldous Huxley envisages material progress all right, but with enormous dangers to human creativity. In such a world, no prodigies or rebels can be born. It is a world of the "hatchery" in which "hobbits" are "manufactured" at various stages of arrested physical and mental development whose strength lies only in falling into line.

The Pegasus upheaval finds a parallel in Orwell's 'Big Brother' symbolising the modern state and its authoritarian apparatus. Governments have lied about intelligence operations, illegally spied on millions of innocent people, and collected data from every conceivable electronic source to be potentially used to censor dissent, blackmail people or just intimidate those who struggle to make corporate and state power accountable. The post-Snowden years have seen new technologies like Pegasus enhancing surveillance to the point of exposing us to the danger of losing our very grip over our day-to-day private affairs.

Expansive interrogation

The ills of the modern state emerging from the culture of secrecy is therefore apparent. There would probably be a world of feasible peace and openness if there were no classified documents. One thing has become clear after the revelation of many governments illegitimately engaging in spying on their citizens: the hour has come to oppose all such excessive oppression through serious political action. Like Edward Snowden, we all live online and indeed, there really is no place to hide. However, the future is not foreclosed, and as long as there is critical inquiry, there is hope. As Howard Zinn, the historian, once said: "We are supposed to be thinking people. We are supposed to be able to question everything."

A more expansive interrogation of the treachery inherent in the return of the Pegasus affair and its fallout for rights activists, investigative journalists and writers calls for a serious probe. Or else, the gradual diminishing of our individual right to free speech and the dismantling of democratic institutions would culminate in the return of Orwell's Oceania.

Shelley Wallia is Professor Emeritus at Panjab University, Chandigarh

FROM THE READERS' EDITOR

What makes a reader keep reading

In long-form journalism, engaging writing matters



A.S. PANNEERSELVAM

Among the multiple challenges a journalist has to confront is the quality of writing that sustains the readers' interest. Elegant writing is neither a legal requirement nor a regulatory prescription. It is an earnest invitation for an exchange of ideas without taxing the reader. One of the instructions Vinod Mehta gave me when I became an editor 20 years ago was to ensure that my journalism is not boring. "Boredom kills journalism," he asserted.

It is trite to say journalism is not fiction. Good, reliable journalism has to adhere to strict factual accuracy. The rules of attribution cannot be compromised. The act of verification is an integral element of journalism. In short reports, these three elements suffice. A talented desk will ensure that no meaning is lost and hence, no reader is lost. However, in long-form journalism, engaging writing matters.

Concerns in narrative journalism

The year I became an editor was the year the Nieman Foundation at Harvard University established a programme on Narrative Journalism. Nieman Curator Bob Giles said, "Narrative journalism builds a newspaper's franchise for the long term. It plays to the strengths of print journalism — space and considered reporting — adding value that no other medium can duplicate." The programme underscored that the values of journalism and creative approaches to prose can easily coexist without the core tenets of good reporting being eroded.

Russell Frank, who worked as a journalist for decades before becoming a journalism teacher, flagged a major concern of editors towards certain aspects of long-form journalism. He wrote: "When reporters write stories that read like good fiction they inevitably arouse suspicions. Fidelity is messy. Speech is messy. If a story is tidy — if the plot is too seamless or the quotes are too eloquent — the reporter probably juiced it a little. Reconstructed scenes are particularly suspect. Instead of relying on tape recordings or notes of their own observations, reporters rely on

the memories of the people who were there." Mr. Frank also pointed out that "the surge of interest in narrative journalism has coincided with a surge of scepticism among newspaper readers." Journalists add notes for their print version and give hyperlinks for the web version to ensure that the rules of attribution are not lost in writing a report.

Fog everywhere

Literature teaches us how to work with words in a manner that the reader doesn't get bored. Much has been written about the journalistic quality of Charles Dickens's writing. What we learned from him is the art of description, which is different from the act of deception. For instance, in *Bleak House*, he wrote: "Fog everywhere. Fog up the river, where it flows among green aits and meadows; fog down the river, where it rolls defiled among the tiers of shipping and the waterside pollutions of a great (and dirty) city. Fog on the Essex marshes, fog on the Kentish heights. Fog creeping into the cabooses of collier-brigs; fog lying out on the yards and hovering in the rigging of great ships; fog drooping on the gunwales of barges and small boats. Fog in the eyes and throats of ancient Greenwich pensioners, wheezing by the firesides of their wards; fog in the stem and bowl of the afternoon pipe of the wrathful skipper, down in his close cabin; fog cruelly pinching the toes and fingers of his shivering little 'prentice boy on deck."

This is a wonderful example of how fragments and extremely long sentences coexist to make reading a worthwhile experience. The fine editor, Harold Evans, in his book, *Do I Make Myself Clear? Why Writing Well Matters*, refers to Dickens to explain the new language of obfuscation that is creeping into our public sphere. He wrote: "Fog everywhere. Fog online and in print, fog exhaled in television studios where time is anyway too short for truth. Fog in the Wall Street executive suites. Fog in the regulating agencies that couldn't see the signals flashing danger in shadow banking." His antidote was: "But never come there fog too thick, never come there mud and mire too deep, never come there bureaucratic waffle so gross as to withstand the clean invigorating wind of a sound English sentence." This, indeed, shall be the governing creed of both the reporters and the desk as they put out their stories.

readerseditor@thehindu.co.in

The benefits of breastfeeding

The promotion of breastfeeding should be a continuous process, not an event restricted to a week

POONGOTHAI ALADI ARUNA

UNICEF states that "breastfeeding is among the most effective ways to protect maternal and child health and promote healthy growth and optimal development in early childhood." Infants should be breastfed within one hour of birth, breastfed exclusively for the first six months of their lives, and be breastfed after six months in combination with solid, semi-solid and soft food until they are about two years old.

Many advantages

Breastfeeding provides greater immunity for children against infection, allergies, cancers and obesity; and improves brain maturation. It is also beneficial for the mother: it promotes faster weight loss after birth, reduces postpartum bleeding, and protects her against breast cancer, ovarian cancer, and osteoporosis. Data from *The Lancet* show that more investment in breastfeeding could add \$300 billion to the global economy and prevent about 8,20,000 child deaths every year.

The advantages of breast milk are evidence-based, yet globally only 25%-40% of babies are breastfed. Breastfeeding and later wet nursing were the norm for millions of years. During the Renaissance period, breastfeeding came to be seen as unfashionable. Feeding bottles and formula milk were aggressively advertised leading to a reduction in breastfeeding between the 17th and 19th century. However, during the late 19th century, an increase in infant mortality rate and rise in non-communicable diseases during adulthood were attributed to bottle feeding. This prompted experts and leaders everywhere to push for breastfeeding across the world.

The World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) was established in 1991 to create awareness about the importance of breastfeeding. In 1992, WABA in coordination with UNICEF introduced World Breastfeeding Week during the first week of August every year. India enacted the Infant Milk Substitutes, Feeding Bottles and Infant Foods Act in 1992 with stringent regulations. However, the National Family Health Survey-5 data

show that there has been a decline in early breastfeeding in as many as 12 of the 22 surveyed States and Union Territories while the share of institutional births has increased.

Maternity and paternity leave

The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) has promised in its manifesto that maternity leave in Tamil Nadu would be extended to 12 months. This is essential as women are entering the workforce in large numbers while society has shifted to a nuclear family system. Such a move will ensure uninterrupted breastfeeding. Nevertheless, counselling and educating the parents, establishing breast milk banks, providing lactating mothers with subsidised breast milk pump equipment, and setting up exclusive facilities to breastfeed will prove to be beneficial for mothers to provide exclusive breastmilk for children up to six months.

The inclusion of husbands in this conversation is incumbent. Both the mother and newborn are vulnerable for the first 12 weeks. Getting used to breastfeeding takes at least 14 days. Therefore, assistance from the partner is indispensable during this time. However, Indian law only allows for 15 days of paternity leave. It is imperative to extend this to 12-16 weeks.

India is a low-middle-income country with a meagre allocation of the GDP towards health. Communicable and non-communicable diseases hamper our economic growth. The theme for World Breastfeeding Week this year is 'Protect Breastfeeding: A Shared Responsibility'. With a change in social, cultural and environmental factors, breastfeeding is no longer mother-centric. Governments must allocate specific funds, rigorously implement the law, invest in educating parents and health workers and involve civil society organisations and the media in spreading awareness. Breastfeeding has decreased during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, it is important that the promotion of breastfeeding should be a continuous process, not an event restricted to a week.

Poongothai Aladi Aruna was Information and Technology Minister of Tamil Nadu under the DMK (2006-2011)

DATA POINT

Doses on the rise

The average rate of daily COVID-19 vaccinations in India increased in the last 11 days of July compared to the previous 10 days. Between July 21 and 31, 4.98 million doses were administered on average daily in the country, which is higher than the average of 3.94 million doses administered daily between July 11 and 20. The seven-day rolling average of shots administered per day increased to 5.3 million by July 31. The average daily inoculations increased significantly in most major States in the final days of July, with U.P., M.P. and Kerala registering the biggest gains. By July 31, only 11% population of the country was fully vaccinated. By **The Hindu Data Team**

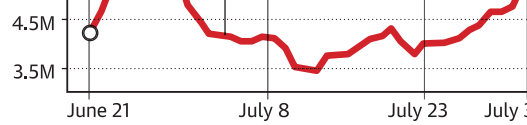
PACE DROPS

From July 21 to 31, 4.98 million doses were administered daily on average. To vaccinate all adults by December 31, 9.22 mn doses need to be administered daily on average in the remaining days

Phases	Doses / day	Cumulative doses by Dec. 31
Phase 1 pace (Jan 16 - Feb 27)	0.34	119.18
Phase 2 pace (Mar 1 - Mar 10)	1.14	363.78
Phase 2 pace (Mar 11 - Mar 20)	1.89	587.57
Phase 2 pace (Mar 21 - Mar 30)	1.85	574.13
Phase 3 pace (Apr 1 - Apr 10)	3.65	1071.89
Phase 3 pace (Apr 11 - Apr 20)	2.85	860.34
Phase 3 pace (Apr 21 - Apr 30)	2.49	766.80
Phase 4 pace (May 1 - May 10)	1.77	590.91
Phase 4 pace (May 11 - May 20)	1.92	625.11
Phase 4 pace (May 21 - May 30)	2.13	672.69
Phase 4 pace (June 1 - June 10)	3.00	861.89
Phase 4 pace (June 11 - June 20)	3.40	942.09
Phase 5 pace (June 21 - June 30)	5.57	1365.78
Phase 5 pace (July 1 - July 10)	4.03	1081.28
Phase 5 pace (July 11 - July 20)	3.94	1065.57
Phase 5 pace (July 21 - July 31)	4.98	1237.21
Target pace (Aug 1 - Dec 31)	9.22	1889.41

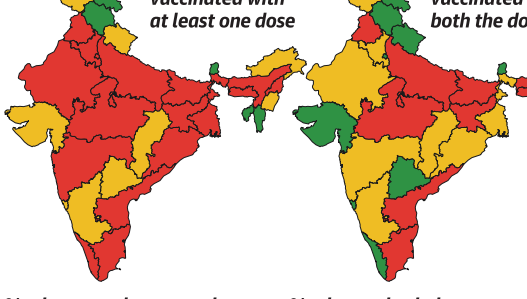
SUSTAINED FALL

The seven-day rolling average of daily doses administered increased consistently between July 21 and 31. It was 5.3 million on July 31.

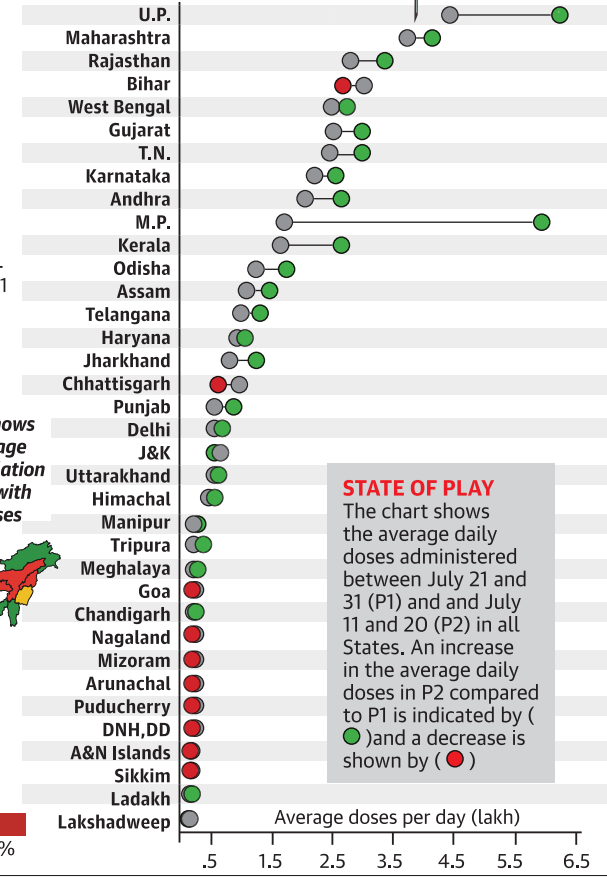
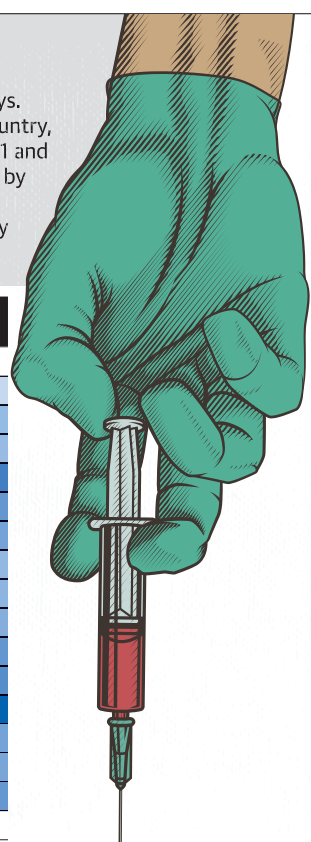


SHARE OF POPULATION

As of July 31, only 11% of the country's population was fully vaccinated, while 39% had received at least one dose. In 10 States, less than 10% of the population had received two doses of the vaccine



The chart shows the percentage of the population vaccinated with at least one dose. The chart shows the percentage of the population vaccinated with both the doses.



STATE OF PLAY

The chart shows the average daily doses administered between July 21 and 31 (P1) and and July 11 and 20 (P2) in all States. An increase in the average daily doses in P2 compared to P1 is indicated by (●) and a decrease is shown by (●).

The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO AUGUST 2, 1971

Electoral rolls being made fool-proof

New Delhi, Aug. 1: The Chief Election Commissioner, Mr. S.P. Sen Varma, said here yesterday that the bogus inclusion and wrongful exclusion of names would be eliminated altogether in the new electoral rolls to be finalised in October. He told newsmen that this was possible with the introduction of the electoral card system, unprecedented in the history of election anywhere in the world. He said that about 125 officers and employees of the Election Commission in 35 batches were checking and supervising the revision of electoral rolls in the Union Territory of Delhi. The two Deputy Election Commissioners and the three Secretaries were daily making random checks both in the rural and urban areas. The last date for completing the enumeration work originally fixed for July 31 had been extended to August 15. Supervision by the Election Commission staff had instilled great enthusiasm among the enumerators and the voters, especially in the rural areas. In a particular area which the Chief Election Commissioner did not want to disclose, there were 2,000 bogus names, and in another there was large-scale exclusion of names.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO AUGUST 2, 1921

The Sikh Situation

Lahore, July 31: A Punjab Government Press Communique States: - On the afternoon of the 27th July H.E. the Governor and Sir John Maynard received a deputation from Chief Khalsa Dewan and discussed with them certain outstanding points in connection with the present Sikh situation. Another Communique states special permission was a few years ago granted to the Sikh community to wear Kirpans, but in granting this concession Government did not intend it to cover the case of large weapons or of ordinary swords and accordingly prosecutions were instituted a few months since against two Sikhs in Amritsar District for wearing such weapons or swords either in addition to or without ordinary Kirpans. The accused were convicted in both these cases but in view of the fact that the practice of wearing large weapons or ordinary swords appears to have now much diminished Government while reserving to themselves the power to take necessary action if the practice again becomes prevalent, have remitted the punishment to which the accused were sentenced in the two cases above referred to.

FROM PAGE ONE

Assam, Mizoram agree to ease border tension



Chaos ensues: Police personnel during the clash at the Assam-Mizoram border on July 26. •PTI

Since the July 26 incident, locals in Assam have blocked the National Highway-306 besides uprooting a stretch of the lone railway track connecting Mizoram. Transportation of people and goods to and from Mizoram has thus been affected.

Withdrawal of FIR likely

The Mizoram government is likely to withdraw the FIR filed against Dr. Sarma, the State's Chief Secretary, Lalnunmawia Chuaungo, told presspersons in Aizawl on Sunday. "Our Chief Minister has suggested that I should look into the inclusion of the Assam Chief Minister's name in the FIR," he said, pointing out that naming Dr. Sarma in the FIR did not have the approval of Mr. Zoramthanga.

The Chief Secretary did not specify if the cases against six Assam officials

and 200 other unidentified police personnel would be withdrawn.

Four booked

The Mizoram police had booked four senior Assam police officers, including an Inspector-General of Police, the Deputy Commissioner and the Divisional Forest Officer of Cachar district on various charges, including attempt to murder and assault. They were asked to appear before the investigation officer at the Vairengte police station in Kolasib district of Mizoram.

Likewise, the Assam police summoned Mizoram Rajya Sabha member K. Vanlalvena and six others officials, including the Kolasib Deputy Commissioner and the Superintendent of Police, for questioning at the Dholai police station in Cachar on Sunday.

Satellite maps to be used to resolve row

Two top officials, however, told *The Hindu* that the government had no plans to hold a "neutral probe" into the July 26 firing incident.

Return of normalcy and confidence building is necessary in the area and that is why CRPF forces are patrolling the areas under the direct supervision of the Union government, the officials said. "Both the State governments are cooperating and the Central government is assured that there will be no more border flare-up," one of the officials quoted above said.

For a more permanent solution to dealing with inter-State border issues, the North Eastern Space Application Centre (NESAC) has been asked to map and demarcate the State boundaries using satellite imaging.

The idea of using satellite imagery for settling border disputes was mooted by Union Home Minister Amit Shah a few months ago, said one of the officials.

A joint initiative of the Department of Space (DoS) and the North Eastern Council (NEC), the Shillong-based NESAC is already being used for flood management in the region. In January this year, the Ministry for Development of the North East Region (DONER) gave the satellite imagery project to NESAC.

"Since there will be scientific methods in the demarcation of borders, there will



The idea was mooted by Home Minister Amit Shah a few months ago.

little scope for discrepancy and there shall be better acceptability of the boundary solutions by the States," one of the officials said.

However, an Assam government official, who didn't want to come on record, contested such a claim. "Disputes arise mainly because there is a difference in perception regarding what constitutes our area and what constitutes their area. For example, Mizoram wants to follow the 1875 notification regarding Lushai Hills but it's not acceptable to us," the official said.

The Mizoram government claimed that a 509 square-mile stretch of the inner-line reserve forest notified in 1875 – under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation of 1873 – belongs to it. The Assam government, on the other hand, maintained that the constitutional map and boundary drawn by Survey of India in 1933 was acceptable to it.

As monsoon recovers, Kharif sowing lag drops below 5%

Three-week break hits acreage under oilseeds, pulses and millets

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

With the monsoon picking up pace again and covering the whole country, sowing of Kharif crops is also showing signs of recovery. The lag in the sown crop area is now less than 5% in comparison with last year's, an improvement from almost 12% two weeks ago.

The biggest continuing lags are in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, where the three-week hiatus in the rains has resulted in lower sown area for rain-fed crops such as coarse cereals, oilseeds and pulses. This gains importance in view of the fact that rising prices of edible oils and pulses have been major contributors to recent inflation trends.

Uneven spread

Though the monsoon rainfall is now just 2% below normal, the overall figures hide both geographical and temporal unevenness. In the third week of June, the mon-



Brisk pace: Farm labourers planting paddy in a field at Rajgarh village near Dakala in Patiala. •PTI

soon halted its progress across central India, resulting in a three-week delay in rain during a crucial sowing season.

According to the India Meteorological Department, Madhya Pradesh, parts of Maharashtra, interior Karnataka and Telangana received excess rainfall in the last week of July, bringing their cumulative rainfall for the season up to normal. Guja-

rat, however, remains in the deficient category, along with eastern Rajasthan. Overall, a third of the districts across the country have seen deficits so far.

According to Agriculture Ministry data, the total sown area across all crops as of July 30 was 848 lakh hectares, 4.7% lower than the 890 lakh hectares sown at the same time last year. A week ago, the lag was almost 9%. In

Millet area down

Coarse cereals and oilseeds are both showing a lag of about 5.6% with shortfalls in Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh. Ragi sowing is down by a third, with a 31% fall in crop area from last year's. The area sown with jowar is down by 11%, bajra 9% and small millets 81%.

Maize is the only cereal which is holding steady with no difference from last year's. Groundnut coverage is down by 10% and soybean still lags 3.4%.

Among pulses, the area sown with moong dal is 10% lower than last year's, while urad lags 9%. Arhar dal sowing, on the other hand, is proceeding briskly, with a 4% gain in crop area so far.

Dhoot moves NCLAT to set aside Videocon order

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Venugopal Dhoot, former promoter and chairman of the Videocon Group, has moved the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) against the June 8, 2021 order of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), Mumbai, approving the bid of Vedanta Group company Twinstar Technologies Ltd. to acquire the bankrupt Videocon Industries Ltd. for ₹2,962 crore.

Mr. Dhoot has petitioned NCLAT to set aside the 'Resolution Plan' approved by the NCLT and to direct the Committee of Creditors to consider the 'Resolution Plan' submitted by him under Section 12A of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code

(IBC) that entails a "zero haircut" (involving no loss to the banks or creditors).

Accusing the resolution professional of withholding information in the tender form and eroding the value of the company by closing it down, Mr. Dhoot said in his petition that the resolution professional had violated Sections 30(2) and 61(3)(ii) of the IBC.

He said the decision to separate the oil assets and the consumer durable assets of the company had led to minuscule price realisation from the bidding process, which he now wants scrapped.

The NCLT had in June, in a verbal order, accepted the bid of Twin Star Technologies Ltd. for Videocon.

On the draw



Adverse police report to cause hurdles in J&K

Move likely to affect hundreds as obtaining a passport or government job will become impossible

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

The J&K police move to deny security clearance to those "involved in crimes prejudicial to the security of the State, including stone-pelting" is likely to affect hundreds of families in Kashmir, where the official list of street protesters swelled significantly between 2008 and 2017 to nearly 20,000.

"All the field units of the CID SB-Kashmir are hereby directed to ensure that during verification related to passport service and any other verification related to government services, schemes, the subject's involvement in law and order, stone pelting cases and other crime prejudicial to the security of the State be specifically looked into and same must be corroborated from local police station records,"



Street fight: Protesters clashing with the police in Srinagar in September 2018. •NISSAR AHMAD

the fresh order reads.

It called for collecting digital evidence such as CCTV footage, photographs, videos, audio clips and quadcopter images available in the records of the police, security forces and agencies as references. "Any subject found involved in any such cases must be denied the security clearances," it said.

Top sources said the list of

persons – including lawyers, journalists, politicians, civil society members – with "adverse background reports" had been growing longer in the past one year. Many mainstream leaders, even from the National Conference and the Peoples Democratic Party, were denied passport and travel documents.

Former Chief Minister and

Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti was denied a passport in March after an "adverse" report by the CID. She approached the High Court but the judge observed that "the scope of this court in the matter of grant or otherwise of passport in favour of an individual is very limited".

Cycles of protests

The fresh order is likely to leave hundreds of local people ineligible for passport and jobs in the Valley, which saw major upheavals and prolonged cycles of street protests and civilian killings during the 2008 Amarnath land row, the 2009 Shopian "murder" case, the 2013 hanging of Parliament attack convict Afzal Guru, the 2016 Burhan Wani killing and the protests after the Centre's move to end J&K's special

status on August 5, 2019.

According to the official figures, 3,773 cases of law and order were registered in 2016 and 2017, and resulted in the arrest of 11,290 people. As many as 9,730 people faced charges between 2008 and 2017 for participating in the protests. The Omar Abdullah and the Mehbooba Mufti governments announced amnesty.

Official figures suggest that between 2016 and 2017, 2,330 people were arrested in Srinagar, 2,046 in Baramulla, 1,385 in Pulwama, 1,123 in Kupwara, 1,118 in Anantnag, 783 in Budgam, 714 in Ganderbal, 694 in Shopian, 548 in Bandipora, 547 in Kulgam and two in Doda districts during 2016 and 2017. Around 56 government employees were among the 4,949 found involved in stone-pelting incidents.

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Supreme Court judge Justice U.U. Lalit on Saturday said every police station in the country must have display boards informing about the right to legal aid and the availability of free legal aid services.

Justice Lalit, who is the Executive Chairman, National Legal Services Authority (NALSA), made the statement during the release of posters containing information about the right to legal aid and availability of the free legal aid services. The posters will be installed at police stations across Haryana.

Such boards/posters are the first step in the direction to ensure that no accused remains unrepresented during investigation and trial, the judge said.

India, China establish hotline in north Sikkim

Army says it will further spirit of trust

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A hotline was established between the Indian Army at Kongra La in north Sikkim and the People's Liberation Army (PLA) at Khamba Dzong in the Tibet Autonomous Region to further the spirit of trust and cordial relations along the border, the Army said on Sunday.

"The inauguration was attended by ground commanders of the respective Armies and a message of friendship and harmony was exchanged through the hotline," the Army said in a statement. The event coincided with PLA Day on August 1, it stated.

Peace measure

Stating that the armed forces of the two countries had well-established mechanisms for communication at the ground commanders' level, the Army said these hotlines in various sectors went a long way in enhancing the same, and in maintaining peace and tranquillity on the borders.

India and China have two military hotlines in eastern

Ladakh, among others at Chushul and Daulat Beg Oldi.

The two sides held the 12th round of Corps Commander talks on Saturday at Moldo on the Chinese side. The details of the outcome are awaited.

As reported by *The Hindu* earlier, since the stand-off began in eastern Ladakh in May 2020, in addition to the Corps Commander-level talks, the two sides have also held ten Major General-level talks, 55 Brigadier-level talks, and 1,450 calls over the two hotlines.

In February, during a telephonic conversation, the Foreign Ministers of India and China agreed to establish a new hotline between the Foreign Ministries as a step to ensure "timely communication" against the backdrop of the Ladakh stand-off.

This will be in addition to the long-delayed hotline between the Indian Army's Director-General of Military Operations and China's Western Theatre Command, which is expected to be established soon.

GST collections recover to ₹1.16 lakh cr. in July

"The improvement in GST collections both on domestic transactions and imports, accompanied by the fact that major producing States have shown significant increases, would indicate that the economic activities have resumed across the country," said M.S. Mani, senior director at Deloitte India.

July's collections include central GST revenue of ₹22,197 crore, State GST of ₹28,541 crore and Integrated GST of ₹47,865 crore, of which nearly ₹28,000 crore

was from import of goods. Compensation Cess collections, used to recompense States for adopting the GST regime, stood at ₹7,790 crore, including ₹815 crore collected on import of goods. "The government has settled ₹28,087 crore to CGST and ₹24,100 crore to SGST from IGST as regular settlement. The total revenue of Centre and the States after regular settlement in the month of July 2021 is ₹50,284 crore for CGST and ₹52,641 crore for the SGST," the Ministry said.

Exercise held to fine-tune integrated theatre commands

All scenarios, including a collusive threat of a two-front war from China and Pakistan, played out, says Defence official

DINAKAR PERI
NEW DELHI

As part of the process of evolving a consensus among the three services on the reorganisation of the forces into integrated tri-service theatre commands and fine-tune the model, a table-top war-gaming exercise was held on July 22 for the first time, in which all scenarios, including a collusive threat of a two-front war from China and Pakistan, were war-gamed, according to a Defence official.

"At the meeting held on July 22, for the first time ever, a table-top exercise was war-gamed with operational settings, which was played across all theatres simultaneously, multi-domain and cross theatre. This was large in extent from the Northern Command to the Andaman and Nicobar islands, and catered to the collusive threat we expect from two of our neighbours," the official said.

This was played for a full day and was attended by

around 40 officers, including the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS), General Bipin Rawat, three Service Chiefs, Vice-Chiefs and Director-General of Military Operations equivalent from the three services.

'Frank exchange'

There was a frank and free-wheeling exchange to evolve the best process on theatreisation and many of the concerns put forward by various sides over the creation of the commands were addressed,

including that of the Air Force, the official said.

Explaining the consultations, the official said when Defence Minister Rajnath Singh was briefed in June, he had advised two things – to form a consultative committee to address the concerns of the stakeholders outside the services and hold consultations to resolve service issues one more time.

The committee headed by the CDS, with the three Vice-Chiefs and representatives from other Ministries con-

cerned, had met and resolved most of the issues related to the functions, rotational nature of all commanders, need for a unified maritime structure, including the Coast Guard, and having the paramilitary in border commands, the official said. Broad consensus emerged on the need to take forward the theatreisation process expeditiously and the Air Force, too, is on board, the official said. "Various views were heard and would be taken on board. It

was made aware that sufficient time would be given for the structures to be formed, reviewed and stabilised."

"The creation of integrated theatre commands West, East, Maritime Theatre Command [MTC] and Integrated Air Defence Command are accordingly being progressed," officials said. As stated by Gen. Rawat earlier, the Northern Command would be left out of the ambit of the process for now and integrated at a later stage.

Kharge writes to Venkaiah on denial of debate

MPs had given notices under Rule 267

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge has written to Rajya Sabha Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu objecting to the Chair's decision not to admit adjournment notices under Rule 267 to discuss the Pegasus snooping controversy, a source said on Sunday.



Mallikarjun Kharge

an opportunity to raise issues even under the rule book".

Though there is no official word on the letter, either from the Congress or Mr. Kharge's office, a senior leader confirmed to *The Hindu* that a letter was sent a few days ago.

For over a week now, Opposition members have been giving notices under Rule 267 on the Pegasus issue but they have not been accepted.

Mr. Kharge has raised the issue in the letter and is said to have pointed out that "Opposition is being denied

When Mr. Naidu had pointed out that Opposition was preventing other members from raising important issues, Deputy Leader of the Congress in the Rajya Sabha Anand Sharma had argued that Opposition should also be allowed to raise issues under the rule book.

As the monsoon session enters its third week, the Opposition is all set to step up its demand for a debate on the Pegasus issue.

UNSC Presidency: Jaishankar lays out policy perspective

Freedom of navigation in South China Sea likely to receive bulk of attention

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE
NEW DELHI

India will always be a supporter of international law, said External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar laying out the policy perspective that the Indian team at the U.N. will pursue during the Security Council Presidency in August. The Minister's comment came as India took charge on Sunday against the backdrop of intensifying conflicts in Afghanistan and Myanmar.

"As we take over UNSC Presidency for August, look forward to working productively with other members. India will always be a voice of moderation, an advocate of dialogue and a proponent of international law," said Mr. Jaishankar in a social media message.

The comment indicates

As we take over UNSC Presidency for August, look forward to working productively with other members. India will always be a voice of moderation, an advocate of dialogue and a proponent of international law

S. JAISHANKAR
External Affairs Minister



that maritime security, which is of significance in dealing with freedom of navigation in the South China Sea, is likely to receive bulk of Indian attention. However, four major Asian conflicts are raging and diplomatic analysts say India should focus on resolving the conflicts in Afghanistan, Myanmar, and Yemen and find a lasting solution to troubles in Syria.

On Sunday, *The Hindu* reported that India will on August 9 organise a virtual Open Debate for heads of state and government titled "Maintenance of international pace and security: Enhancing maritime security - A case for international cooperation." It was also reported that meetings related to the Asian conflicts could be convened during August.

India's past role in using the UNSC as a tool for conflict resolution was highlighted by Minister of Housing

and Urban Affairs Hardeep Singh Puri, who served as the Permanent Representative of India at the Security Council in 2011.

"Ten years ago this day, India had last assumed presidency of the UNSC. I was privileged to preside over the horseshoe. We specifically cautioned against the 'use of force' in Libya and failure to act in Syria. Results are staring us in the face and continue to haunt the UNSC," said Mr. Puri in a social media post on Sunday.

The developments in Afghanistan and Myanmar especially are of immediate importance to India and the broader Asian region. India is an elected non-permanent member of the Security Council and had received support of the Asia-Pacific countries in the election.

Union Ministers meet Muslim women

Meet to mark the second anniversary of enactment of law against triple talaq

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Union Ministers Smriti Irani, Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi and Bhupendra Yadav held a meeting with a group of Muslim women on Sunday, which was observed as 'Muslim Women Rights Day' to mark the second anniversary of the enactment of the law against triple talaq. The Ministers also interacted with several women who were affected by triple talaq.



Interactive session: From left, Bhupendra Yadav, Smriti Irani and Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, in New Delhi on Sunday. • PTI

Big reform: Naqvi Minister for Minority Affairs Mr. Naqvi said the law against triple talaq had proven to be a "big reform" to ensure constitutional rights for Muslim women, said a statement by his Ministry.

Employment Mr. Yadav was quoted as saying that the Centre's decision to provide quota for OBCs and economically backward sections in medical/dental studies would also benefit the poor sections of Muslims.

Meanwhile, Over 650 citizens - Muslim and non-Muslim women, men and transpersons, women rights activists, human rights activists, academics, students and hundreds of citizens - issued a strong statement 'rejecting' the gesture of observing Muslim Women

Rights Day as mere "optics during an unprecedented onslaught against the rights of the Muslims under the present government".

"This government has remained silent as Muslims have been lynched... The BJP, both at the Centre and through its State governments, has determinedly 'gone after' Muslims under myriad laws, both old, new and proposed - beef bans, anti-conversion including the recent Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Religious Conversion Ordinance, 2020, and its proposed U.P. Population Control Bill. Such a government has no moral right to declare any national day in the name of Muslim women," the statement said.

Second Congress MLA from Assam joins BJP

Sushanta Borgohain is a two-time MLA

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

Two-time Congress MLA from eastern Assam's Thowra Assembly constituency, Sushanta Borgohain, joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Sunday.

He is the second legislator to switch over to the BJP after Rupjyoti Kurmi, who won the Mariani Assembly seat for the fourth straight time earlier this year.

"His joining will strengthen the party immensely," Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said, welcoming Mr. Borgohain, who has been one of the most vocal critics of the BJP.

The BJP is expected to field him for the Thowra

constituency in the bye-election scheduled by October. Mr. Kurmi is also expected to be fielded from the Mariani seat.

Mr. Borgohain had submitted his resignation from the Legislative Assembly on July 31, a day after quitting Congress.

Down to 27 seats Congress is now down to 27 seats in the 126-member Assam Assembly.

The House has an effective strength of 122 after the resignation of the Congress duo, and the death of two other MLAs - one each from the Bodoland People's Front and United People's Party Liberal.

Unnao accident: Delhi court upholds CBI finding

Investigating agency ruled out foul play in 2019 incident

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court has upheld the finding of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) which ruled out any foul play in the 2019 car accident involving the survivor of the Unnao gang rape.

The CBI concluded that there was no evidence regarding criminal conspiracy hatched among the accused persons, including expelled BJP MLA Kuldeep Singh Sengar, who is serving a life imprisonment for raping the girl in 2017, with the driver of the truck, which collided with the car carrying the victims.

On July 28, 2019, the survivor, along with her two aunts and a lawyer, were on their way to meet her uncle Mahesh Singh, who was lodged in a Rae Bareilly jail, when their car collided with a truck. The survivor's two aunts and the lawyer were killed in the accident.

Mr. Mahesh Singh, in his complaint, alleged that the accident was the result of a



Kuldeep Singh Sengar

conspiracy hatched by Sengar along with his associates. He also alleged that in order to execute the conspiracy, the Personal Security Officers (PSOs) who were deployed with the rape victim and her family members were withdrawn which was why they were not accompanying the victims in the car.

District and Sessions Judge Dharmesh Sharma noted, "There was indeed a very diabolical background of the events that had taken place prior to the incident in question, but at the stage of considering taking of cognisance of offences allegedly

committed by the accused persons, this court cannot be swayed by public sentiments, media reports nor the aspect of the conviction of Kuldeep Singh Sengar".

"I have no hesitation in holding the findings of the CBI in the final report/charge sheet that there is no case against the accused persons so as to take cognisance and proceed against them under Section 302 (murder) and 307 (attempt to murder) of IPC r/w Section 120 B of IPC can not be faulted," the judge said.

The court said that merely because Sengar had been provided with a mobile phone "surreptitiously by the jail authority at Sitapur Jail would not invite an inference that he was involved in the planning the accident". The court, however, framed charges against the truck driver for causing death by rash and negligent driving, besides framing charges of criminal intimidation against Sengar and his associates.

Survivor alleges harassment by personal security officers

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Unnao rape survivor has approached a Delhi court alleging harassment by the personal security officers (PSO) deputed on the direction of the Supreme Court for her protection.

District and Sessions Judge Dharmesh Sharma directed the Investigating Officer of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to submit an impact assessment report

in this regard with the assistance of the local police.

"Application has been moved on the behalf of the complainant that she and her family members were harassed by the PSOs who are deputed as per the direction of the Supreme Court, in a sense that they are not allowing her to enjoy her liberties," the court said.

The court said that a sealed envelope was also received from the police in

which certain allegations were levelled against the complainant and her family members. "It is directed that this application be taken up for consideration, the court said.

The woman was kidnapped and raped by expelled Bharatiya Janata Party MLA Kuldeep Singh Sengar in 2017 when she was a minor. The case was transferred from Unnao to Delhi and was probed by the CBI.

Trinamool eyes Tripura to gain national footprint

Abhishek Banerjee to visit Agartala today

SHIV SAHAY SINGH
KOLKATA

During the high-pitched election campaign in the 2021 West Bengal Assembly polls, Trinamool Congress chairperson Mamata Banerjee did not attack the Left parties particularly the CPI (M). However, the only leader whose name the West Bengal Chief Minister referred to again and again during her campaign was



Launching an attack: Mamata Banerjee criticised Tripura CM Manik Sarkar several times during her campaign. • FILE PHOTO

former Tripura Chief Minister Manik Sarkar.

"Ask Manik Babu what the BJP has done in Tripura," Ms.

Banerjee would often refer in her speeches. Much to the advantage of the Trinamool, Mr. Sarkar campaigned in

Maharashtra Raj Bhavan has become BJP's office: Patole

State Congress chief lashes out at BJP for curtailing press

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PUNE

Launching a broadside against the Narendra Modi-led Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government at the Centre, Maharashtra Congress chief Nana Patole on Sunday charged the BJP with distorting history while accusing Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari of being a "BJP stooge" and his official residence, the Raj Bhavan, a "virtual office for the party".

He further lashed out at

the Modi regime for severely curtailing the press, claiming that the former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi had extended a lot of freedom towards the fourth estate despite getting flak from it in the alleged Bofors Gun scandal.

"Recently, the State's Governor Koshyari commented that it was Jawaharlal Nehru who was responsible for Partition in 1947... ordinarily, if one were to talk of Pandit Nehru's towering contributions in building the modern Indian nation, even 10 days

would be less. But when the Governor of a State, who is supposed to be the holder of an impartial office, says such a thing, it is truly shameful...the Governor is behaving like a BJP agent and his residence is functioning like a veritable BJP office," Mr. Patole said.

He was speaking in Pune at the historic Kesari Wada building on occasion of the launch of a series of programmes to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee year of Independence.

'States too must ensure cases are not filed under Sec. 66A'

It was declared unconstitutional in 2015

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

States and their agencies share an "equal responsibility" to ensure that people are not booked under Section 66A of the Information Technology Act for expressing themselves freely on social media, the Centre has submitted in an affidavit to the Supreme Court.

Section 66A was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in a judgment in 2015. On July 5 this year, an apex court Bench led by Justice Rohinton F. Nariman said it was "distressing," "shocking" and "terrible" that people are still booked and tried under Section 66A even six years after the apex court struck down the provision as unconstitutional and a violation of free speech.

The People's Union of Civil Liberties (PUCIL), an NGO represented by senior advocate Sanjay Parikh and advocate Aparna Bhat, had drawn the court's attention to the violations.

Justice Nariman had authored the judgment trashing Section 66A in a petition filed by law student Shreya Singhal, who highlighted cases of young people being arrested and charged under the ambiguous provision for their social media posts.

In its response, the Centre said the police and public order were "State subjects" under the Constitution.

"Prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of crimes and capacity-building of the police are primarily the responsibility of the States," the Centre submitted in the affidavit.

It said law enforcement agencies share equal responsibility to comply with



the apex court judgment. They take action against cyber crime offenders as per the law.

The Centre said the Ministries of Information and Technology and Home Affairs had done their best to disseminate knowledge about the Supreme Court judgment in Shreya Singhal case. Section 66A had prescribed three years' imprisonment if a social media message caused "annoyance" or was found "grossly offensive".

The Supreme Court had concluded the provision to be vague and worded arbitrarily. Justice Nariman had agreed with Mr. Parikh on July 7 that the "state of affairs is shocking".

Mr. Parikh had urged the court to intervene and work out a mechanism to disseminate the Shreya Singhal judgment to every police station and trial court in the country.

"Section 66A of the IT Act has continued to be in use not only within police stations but also in cases before trial courts across India," the PUCIL has submitted.

The NGO has urged the apex court to direct the government to collect all the data/information regarding investigations under Section 66A and pending cases in district and High Courts.

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER PROJECT, PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT, JODHPUR
Tel. 0291-2651700 E-mail : rj_cjeod@nic.in
No. CE(P)/PHED/Ju / 21-22/ 4145-245 Date: 26-07-2021
Notice Inviting Bid (NIB No. 04/2021-22)
Bid for Execution of works related to 'Coverage of 29 villages by providing Functional house Hold Tap connection (FHTC) via RWSS Kansingh ki Sid-Khidrat-Mandore Scheme of block Bap of District Jodhpur' viz. RCC OHSRs, CWR, P/L/J of Pumping mains, Cluster distribution system, Village distribution system, Construction of Boundary wall, and civil, mechanical, electrical & instrumentation works, including Geo-tagging complete job as per scope & specifications on Single Point Responsibility Basis Turnkey Lump sum contract including necessary Design and Operation & maintenance for 10 years (upto VTC) after 1 year defect liability period under Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) is invited from interested bidder up to 14:00 hrs, 18/08/2021. Other particulars of the bid may be visited on the procurement portal (<http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>, <http://sppp.raj.nic.in>) of the state; and <http://dipr.rajasthan.gov.in> and <http://phedwater.rajasthan.gov.in>.
UBN: PHE2122WLOB05445
NIB Code:- PHE2122A2428
(Neeraj Mathur)
Chief Engineer Project
PHED Jodhpur
DIPRC/7483

OFFICE OF ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER PHED, JAIPUR REGION-I, JAIPUR
Jyoti Nagar, Sahakar Marg, Jaipur-302005
Phone:0141-2740170(t) ace1.jpr.phed@rajasthan.gov.in; www.ace1.jpr.phed@rajasthan.gov.in
No : F (I)/ACE/PHED/Ar. Dausa/ NIT-49/2021-22/5950-54 Date : 22/07/2021
(e-NIT NO. 59/2021-22)
Online tenders are hereby invited on behalf of the Governor of Rajasthan for the following works from the bidder meeting eligibility as per criteria mentioned in the detailed tender document which can be seen and downloaded from website <https://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>. Tenders are to be submitted online in electronic format on website <https://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in> as per schedule given below-

NIT No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (Rs. in Cr.)	Earnest Money (Rs.)	Last date for submission of tender	Due date for opening
69/2021-22	Work of Conversion of various RWSS to provide FHTC including one year Defect Liability period of various SWS & MVS under JJM in the jurisdiction of PHED Sub. Division Labot Dist. Dausa	7.93	Bidder has to submit Declaration on Rs 50/- Plus 30% surcharge stamp paper as per F.D. Circular Dt 23.12.2020	16.08.2021 (upto 18:00 Hrs)	17.08.2021 at 15:00 Hrs

NIT No. 69/2021-22 NIB No. PHE2122A2377 UBN No. PHE2122WLOB05285
(Arun Srivastava)
Addl. Chief Engineer
PHED, Jaipur Region-I, Jaipur
DIPRC/7458

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU - DEPARTMENT OF MUSEUMS
Tender Notice
Sealed Tenders are invited by the Director, Department of Museums for the implementation of projects - Restoration of a Heritage Building and its Adaptive Reuse as a Vintage Cafeteria and Interior Gallery Finishing and Renovation of Part of Pantheon Building at the Government Museum, Chennai. Date : 02.08.2021

Tender No.	Name of Work & Place	Cost of Tender form in INR	EMD in INR
DOM/GMC/1945/2021/G6	Restoration of a Heritage Building and its Adaptive Reuse as a Vintage Cafeteria at the Government Museum, Chennai.	3500/-	3,00,000/-
DOM/GMC/1946/2021/G6	Implementation of Interior Gallery Finishing and Renovation of Part of the Pantheon Building at Government Museum, Chennai.	6000/-	6,00,000/-

Date & Time of Issue of Tender Documents : Tender forms are available on all working days from 11.00 A.M to 4.00 P.M at the Government Museum, Chennai till 31.08.2021 on payment. This also can be viewed and downloaded from <http://www.governmentmuseumchennai.org> & www.tenders.tn.gov.in
Due Date for Receipt of Tenders : 01.08.2021, 3.00 pm.
Date & Time of Opening Tenders : 01.09.2021, 3.30 pm.
Phone: 044-28193035 / 044-28193778
Email: govtmuse@tn.gov.in DIPRC/ 2282 /TENDER/2021
Director, Department of Museums, Egmore, Chennai - 600 008.

CIC flays govt.'s denial of details on oxygen panel

'Respond to the Right to Information request within 10 days'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Central Information Commission (CIC) has slammed the Union government's blanket denial of information related to a committee overseeing medical oxygen supplies during the pandemic, stating that its rationale was "far-fetched" and "unjustified". In its order on Saturday, Information Commissioner Vanaja Sarna directed the government to respond to the Right to Information (RTI) request within 10 days.

The RTI request, filed by activist and freelance journalist Saurav Das in April 2021, sought information on a nine-member Empowered Group set up a year earlier under the Chairmanship of the Secretary, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade. When the first wave of the pandemic began, it was responsible for coordinating the supply of PPE kits, RT-PCR test kits, N-95 masks and gloves. It subsequently became responsible for the



Lack of information: Medical oxygen cylinders for patients at a hospital in New Delhi. •SHIV KUMAR PUSHAKAR

supply of medical oxygen as well. Mr. Das requested information on the dates, agenda and minutes of the committee's meetings till date, and presentations made to the committee.

The government denied the request, citing Sections of the RTI law that allow exemptions on the grounds of national security, strategic interests, commercial confidences, intellectual property and Cabinet papers.

In a hearing on Saturday, the Central Public Information Officer (CPIO) argued that the Empowered Group was set up in a time of crisis

to cut across the several arms of the government and ensure that bureaucratic hassles did not impede decision-making. "These proposals and deliberations contain highly sensitive information," he said.

The CIC dismissed the government's defence, saying that the citing of exemption on the grounds of Cabinet discussions "appears to be an afterthought, which seems far-fetched also". The exemption cited related to national security was "also not justified." The CIC further directed the CPIO to provide a reply within 10 days.

Clinical trials of 'Ashwagandha' soon

The trials will be conducted on 2,000 participants in three U.K. cities, says govt.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Ayush has collaborated with the U.K.'s London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) to conduct a study on 'Ashwagandha' for promoting recovery from COVID-19.

A Ministry release said the All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA), an autonomous body under the Ministry of Ayush, and the LSHTM recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to conduct clinical trials of 'Ashwagandha' on 2,000 participants in three U.K. cities - Leicester, Birmingham and London (Southall and Wembley).

'Indian winter cherry' 'Ashwagandha' (*Withania somnifera*), commonly known as 'Indian winter cherry', is a traditional Indian herb that boosts energy, reduces stress and makes the immune system stronger. It is an easily accessible, over-the-counter nutritional supplement in the U.K. and has a proven safety profile. The positive effects of 'Ashwagandha' have been observed in long COVID-19,



Research on: 'Ashwagandha' is an easily accessible, over-the-counter nutritional supplement in the U.K.

which is a multi-system disease with no evidence of its effective treatment or management. It added that the successful completion of the trial could be a major breakthrough and could give scientific validity to India's traditional medicinal system.

"While there have been several studies on 'Ashwagandha' to understand its benefits in various ailments, this is the first time the Ministry of Ayush has collaborated with a foreign institution to investigate its efficacy on COVID-19 patients," the Ministry said.

According to AIIA director Tanuja Manoj Nesari, who is also a co-investigator in the

project along with Rajgopalan, coordinator (international projects), the participants have been randomly selected. Sanjay Kinra of the LSHTM is the principal investigator of the study.

"For three months, one group of 1,000 participants will be administered 'Ashwagandha' [AG] tablets, while the second group of 1,000 participants will be assigned a placebo, which is indistinguishable from AG in looks and taste. Both patients and the doctors will be unaware of the group's treatment in a double-blind trial," Dr. Nesari said.

The participants would have to take the 500 mg tablets twice a day. A monthly

follow-up of self-reported quality of life, impairment to activities of daily living, mental and physical health symptoms, supplement use and adverse events would be carried out.

It took over 100 meetings spanning about 16 months through both diplomatic as well as regulatory channels to sign the MoU, Dr. Nesari said. She added that the study had been approved by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and certified by the World Health Organization-Good Manufacturing Practices (WHO-GMP).

Reducing anxiety

Recently, a number of randomised placebo-controlled trials of AG in humans in India had demonstrated its efficacy in reducing anxiety and stress, improving muscle strength and reducing symptoms of fatigue in patients treated for chronic conditions.

"After the trial's success, 'Ashwagandha' will be a proven medicinal treatment to prevent infection and be recognised by the scientific community worldwide," the Ministry noted.

Goa misses deadline to give first jab

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PANAJI

The July 31 deadline to complete administering the first COVID-19 vaccine dose to all eligible beneficiaries in Goa has been missed as only 87% of the target has been met, a senior official said on Sunday.

The July 31 deadline was set by Chief Minister Pramod Sawant with the aim of getting the State prepared to tackle a possible third wave of the infection.

"Now, 87% of the eligible population of Goa has been given the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. Currently, 23% of beneficiaries have got both doses," State Vaccination Officer Dr. Rajendra Borkar said.

Independent MLA Rohan Khaunte attacked the government for missing the deadline and said the Bharatiya Janata Party was more interested in "trampling democracy" than fighting the pandemic.

Goa on Sunday reported 59 fresh cases and one death, taking the tally to 1,71,205 and the toll to 3,148. With 105 patients being discharged, total recoveries rose to 1,67,046.

Give details of vacancies for disabled in CSE: HC

Submit this before Aug. 2, it tells govt.

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has asked the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) to give the details of the total number of vacancies notified and reservations given in accordance with the Right of Persons with Disabilities Act for the Civil Services Exam (CSE), 2020.

A Bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice Jyoti Singh gave the direction while hearing two petitions, which alleged that seats for the visually challenged and persons with multiple disabilities had not been reserved in accordance with the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act of 2016. The High Court asked the DoPT to submit an additional affidavit before August 2, the next date of the hearing. "The DoPT will clearly highlight in the affidavit the total number of vacancies notified and the reservations given in accordance with Section 34 (1) of the Right of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 as also the details of 251 vacancies for which it is stated that no reservations can be made," the court ordered.

The Union government's standing counsel submitted that the final vacancies notified for the CSE, 2020, were

836, out of which there could be no reservation for 251 vacancies. The counsel said as against the remaining 585 vacancies, 24 had been reserved and the reservation was in accordance with the mandate of Section 34(1) of the Act, that is, 4%.

The High Court was dealing with two petitions - one filed by the Evara Foundation and other by NGO Sambhavanam. It had earlier sought responses of the government, the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) and the DoPT on the petitions seeking quashing of the notice announcing the civil services preliminary and an interim stay on the declaration of the results on the ground that an inadequate number of seats had been reserved for persons with visual and multiple disabilities.

The Evara Foundation contended that due to an inadequate number of vacancies for the visually challenged and those with multiple disabilities, fewer candidates belonging to these two categories would qualify for the main examination.

NGO Sambhavana said the UPSC had reserved only 24 vacancies for persons with disabilities out of a total 796 "expected approximate vacancies".

Punjab paddy farmers taking to new technique

'DSR technique saves groundwater, is cheaper and yield and quality are good'

VIKAS VASUDEVA
CHANDIGARH

Punjab Agricultural University's (PAU) upgraded technology for the direct seeding of rice (DSR), the 'tar watter' (good soil moisture) DSR, seems to have caught the fancy of paddy farmers in the State.

A rise in the area planted under the novel DSR technique indicate that farmers are moving away from the traditional practice of puddle transplanting.

Improved version

The Ludhiana-based University introduced the DSR technique in 2020, an improved version of earlier DSR (dry) technique.

In the new technique, pre-sowing irrigation is applied in a levelled field and the primed seed is sown immediately.

"Last year, the COVID-19 outbreak and the subse-



A farmer sowing paddy seeds in his fields using the DSR method in Punjab.

quent lockdown had led to an exodus of labour. There was concern among farmers on the timely completion of planting due to a shortage of labour. However, availability of the DSR technology came to their rescue. Rice was di-

rectly seeded on about one-fifth of the area in the State. The successful adoption of the technology has even found an echo in Haryana. In 2020, rice was sown through DSR in about five lakh hectares in Punjab, against just

23,450 hectares in 2019," Makhn Singh Bhullar, principal agronomist at PAU, told *The Hindu*.

"This year, rice cultivation area under DSR has touched about five lakh hectares. We are hopeful that this may increase after the final data is compiled," he said.

Mr. Bhullar said yield levels after a large-scale adoption of the DSR technique in 2020 had convinced farmers about its viability.

"The DSR method saves a lot of groundwater because the crop does not need frequent irrigation as in the case of a puddled paddy field. The method is also pocket-friendly as manual transplanting is getting costlier with each passing season. This method also addresses the shortage of farm labour," Amreet Inder Dhillon from Mehtabgarh in Ludhiana, who uses the DSR technique, said.

Road to boxer's home being repaired in Assam

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

The Public Works Department (PWD) has started repairing the road to boxer Lovlina Borgohain's home in Golaghat district, eastern Assam. The work was undertaken soon after she reached the welterweight category

semi-finals in women's boxing at the Tokyo Olympics, assuring at least a bronze medal for India.

The 23-year-old pugilist's home in Baromukhia village under the Sarupathar Assembly constituency has had a partly-metalled road for years.

The village is about 3 km from Barpathar, the nearest town.

'Before she returns'

"We are trying to repair the road with sand and gravel before she returns from Tokyo. The road will be metalled after the monsoon sea-

son," Sarupathar's BJP MLA Biswajit Phukan said, adding that Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had wanted the road to be usable for vehicles within a few days.

PWD officials said about 600 metres of the road leading to Ms. Borgohain's home would be repaired for now.

U.P. on top in terms of law and order, says Shah

He lavishes praise on CM Adityanath

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
LUCKNOW

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday lauded Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and his team for taking the State to the "top spot in the country" with regard to law and order. Mr. Shah said the State had developed in all fields under Mr. Adityanath, and the State government had done well during both waves of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Speaking at the foundation laying ceremony of the Uttar Pradesh Institute of Forensic Sciences here, Mr. Shah targeted the Opposition parties and said "those dreaming" of coming to power in 2022 should prepare themselves for another rout. "Those dreaming [of coming to power], I want to tell them, *bhaiya* [brother], once again prepare yourself for a crushing defeat. BJP is going to form the government with a huge majority," Mr. Shah said. In 2017, the BJP and its allies had won over 320 seats in the 403-member Assembly.

Mr. Shah also appealed to voters in the State to not be misled, but to see for themselves the development works in their village and cities along with the change in the law and order situation since 2017. "Riots have come



Union Home Minister Amit Shah with U.P. CM Yogi Adityanath in Lucknow. •PTI

to an end. Look at that. *Jati-vad* [casteism] came to an end. BJP has uprooted *parivaarvad* [dynastic politics]," Mr. Shah said.

'Not based on caste'

The BJP governments did not function on the basis of castes or families, but for the poorest person in the country and for improving law and order, he added.

Mr. Shah attacked Opposition parties and political leaders, claiming that they get active only when elections approach. He said these leaders were nowhere to be seen during floods or COVID-19, or when farmers were dying of hunger.

Later, speaking in Mirzapur while laying the foundation stone of the Vindhyavasi Corridor project, Mr. Shah asserted that the BJP did not fear vote bank politics.

TH CROSSWORD + 13315
(set by Arden)

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15 Randy felon is dividing prize money, it's a very small amount (12)
18 Invested after a magazine became traditional (4-8)
21 A woman in America, for us in India (6)
22 I'm on it, following a setter within a time frame (3,5)
24 Venerated marriage vow - left side shaky (8)
25 Beer only after a bite (6)
26 One called into shade to give an earful (8)
27 Instruments used only in batteries (6)

■ DOWN
1 In other constituencies, insets have no effect (3,2,3)
2 Feeling about maiden, same feeling (8)
3 After open text messaging you are sent out of the church (15)
5 When calm hearts get cured (4)
6 Who's Putin to be allowed to come in the way? It's a dangerous game... (7,8)
7 ... a bit like promoting a strongman (6)
8 Our predecessors put me in a cage... (6)
11 ... slated to be free, yea (7)
14 Wrong categorisation, linking Titania with this Dickensian character (7)
16 Deplorable to get caught at boundary, covers are off for last match (8)
17 Upsurge is on novel books (8)
19 Basically cut in and cut out, looks tacky (6)
20 Our support for gun and protection (6)
23 Proper use of annexed land (4)

SUDOKU

		6		9		8		1
1				4	2			5
					1	2	4	
6		1						8
	4			8			5	
2						4	6	
	6	2	7					
5				6	2			7
7	8		1		5			

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

Solution to puzzle 13314

U	T	T	E	R	D	I	S	R	E	G	A	R	D
A	E	X	A	O	C	L	U						
B	E	R	E	T	N	O	N	M	O	T	I	L	E
A	D	R	D	I	N	C	H	E	D				
C	L	I	M	A	T	E	C	H	O	L	E	R	A
U	N												
S	W	E	D	E	T	I	M	B	R	I	C	A	T
S	M	O	E	S	L								
D	E	S	M	O	I	N	S	E	X	A	C	T	
R	E	L	L	P	E	B	E	R					
A	N	N	E	L	I	D	A	L	M	A	A	T	A
S	A	I	R	N	U	S	C						
T	A	U	T	E	N	I	N	G	M	I	T	R	E
J	R	N	E	L	P	E	R						
C	O	U	N	T	E	R	M	E	A	S	U	R	E

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

8	4	2	9	6	7	1	3	5
3	1	9	5	4	2	8	6	7
7	5	6	1	8	3	2	9	4
5	9	3	7	2	8	6	4	1
6	2	7	4	9	1	3	5	8
4	8	1	3	5	6	9	7	2
9	6	4	2	1	5	7	8	3
2	7	5	8	3	9	4	1	6
1	3	8	6	7	4	5	2	9

FAITH

Mantra to protect children

Kamsa sends Putana to kill the baby Krishna, growing up in Gokula. Srimad Bhagavatam says she went as a lovely lady. Why did Putana have to adorn herself and look good? It was the norm in the past for a mother to dress up well and look pleasant, when she picked up her child to feed it, so that the child looking at her would be happy. Nampillai says this practice was observed widely. The importance of breastfeeding is stressed thus, elaborated V.S. Karunakarachariar in a mantra. Also, the first time a mother feeds her child, the father has to utter a mantra. Apsatamba sutra says that soon after the child is born, the mother must feed it from her right breast, while the father recites the mantra. The mantra goes thus: "Let no demons hurt your child. Let there be no danger to this child from ghosts. Let milk yielding cows not hurt this child. Let this child have a lot of affection for you. This child will drink up your old age. This child should get strength through your milk." So, the mantra says that neither harmful beings like demons, nor harmless ones like cows should hurt the child in any way. The phrase used in the mantra for the child is "dhanasya priyaa," meaning the dear child is the mother's wealth. Thus breastfeeding was given great importance, with a ritual and a mantra dedicated to it. When Putana puts Krishna to her breast, he sucks not only her milk, but her life as well.

Later, Krishna recalling the incident, praises Vasudeva's adherence to prescribed practices as having protected Him. He is referring here to the fact that when He was born, Devaki breastfed Him, and that Vasudeva recited the mantra for His protection at that time. The Lord showed the world the importance of this ritual and how the mantra serves to protect the baby.

Afghan forces digging in to defend cities

At least two rockets hit Kandahar airport, disrupting flights; residents flee amid airstrikes, street battles

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
KANDAHAR

Afghan forces fought fierce street battles and bombed Taliban positions on Sunday while insurgents swarmed major cities as they stepped up their nationwide offensive.

Hundreds of commandos were deployed to the western city of Herat while authorities in the southern city of Lashkar Gah called for more troops to rein in the assaults even as Afghan air strikes left scores dead on the streets, residents said.

Fighting has surged across Afghanistan since early May when U.S.-led foreign forces began a final withdrawal that is now almost complete.

After seizing large tracts of rural territory and capturing key border crossings, the Taliban have started assaulting provincial capitals.

In Kandahar, Afghanistan's second-largest city and



Fighting intensifies: Afghan commandos standing guard in Enjil district of Herat province on Sunday. •AFP

the former stronghold of the insurgents, days of fighting have displaced thousands of people who crowded into the city centre to escape the crossfire on the edge of the provincial capital.

Flights out of Kandahar were suspended on Sunday after at least two rockets hit the runway before dawn.

The facility is vital to

maintaining the logistics and air support needed to keep the Taliban from overrunning the city, while also providing aerial cover for large tracts of southern Afghanistan.

Taliban claims attack

The Taliban claimed the attack, saying government warplanes were "bombard-

ing" their positions from the airport.

The rocket barrage came as the Taliban inched closer to overwhelming at least two other provincial capitals, including nearby Lashkar Gah in Helmand province.

"Fighting is going on inside the city and we have asked for special forces to be deployed," Attaullah Afghan, head of Helmand provincial council, said.

Afghan security forces have increasingly relied on air strikes to push the militants back from cities even as they run the risk of hitting civilians in populated areas.

"Every inch of the city has been bombed," Badshah Khan, a resident of Lashkar Gah, said, adding the two warring sides were fighting "street to street" battles.

"You can see dead bodies on the streets. There are bodies of people in the main square," he said, adding the

Taliban had even surrounded the city's police headquarters and Governor's office.

"The threat is high in these three provinces... but we are determined to repel their attacks," Afghan security forces spokesman Ajmal Omar Shinwari said.

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) demanded the Taliban "provide answers" for the rocket attack on its office in Herat on Friday that killed an Afghan guard.

The capture of any major urban centre would take their current offensive to another level and fuel concerns that the army is incapable of resisting the advances.

As fighting raged, President Ashraf Ghani again slammed the Taliban for failing to marshal their negotiating power to reach a peace deal.

U.S., U.K., Israel blame Iran for ship attack

ASSOCIATED PRESS
JERUSALEM

The U.S. and the U.K. joined Israel on Sunday in alleging Iran carried out a fatal drone strike on an oil tanker off the coast of Oman in the Arabian Sea, in which two people were killed, putting further pressure on Tehran as it denied being involved in the assault.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the U.S. was "confident" Iran carried out the attack, using multiple drones.

Calling it a "unlawful and callous attack," British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said his country and its allies planned a coordinated response over the strike.

Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett earlier said Israeli intelligence had evidence linking Iran to the attack, but did not offer it.

Myanmar junta ruler takes PM role

He pledges to hold elections by 2023

REUTERS
BANGKOK

Myanmar's military ruler Min Aung Hlaing has taken on the role of Prime Minister in a newly formed caretaker government, state media reported on Sunday, six months after the Army seized power from a civilian government.

In a speech on Sunday, Gen. Min Aung Hlaing repeated a pledge to hold elections by 2023 and said his administration was ready to work with a future regional envoy on Myanmar.

The announcement and speech came exactly six months after the Army seized power on February 1 from a civilian government following elections that were won by Aung San Suu Kyi's ruling party but that the military said had been fraudulent.

Gen. Min Aung Hlaing has chaired the State Administration Council (SAC) that was formed just after the coup and that has run Myanmar since then, and the caretaker government will replace it.

"In order to perform the country's duties fast, easily and effectively, the state administration council has been re-formed as caretaker government of Myanmar," a newsreader on state Myawaddy television said.

In his speech, Gen. Min Aung Hlaing repeated a pledge to restore democracy, saying, "We will accomplish the provisions of the state of emergency by August 2023".

He added: "I guarantee the establishment of a union based on democracy and federalism."

Shortly after the coup, junta leaders promised new elections within two years. The reference on Sunday to



Gen. Min Aung Hlaing

August 2023 was interpreted by some local media as extending that time frame by six months.

Gen. Min Aung Hlaing also said his administration would work with any special envoy named by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

ASEAN meet

ASEAN Foreign Ministers are to meet on Monday, when diplomats say they aim to finalise a special envoy tasked with ending violence and promoting dialogue between the junta and its opponents.

The military authorities have faced months of protests, strikes that have paralysed public and private sectors, and a resurgence of armed conflicts in the borderlands.

The authorities have branded their opponents as terrorists. "At present, the whole country is stable except for some terrorist attacks," Mr. Min Aung Hlaing said.

The Assistance Association for Political Prisoners activist group has accused the armed forces of killing 939 people since the coup and said at least 6,990 military opponents have been arrested.

The military said the number of protesters killed is far lower.

ELSEWHERE



Haniyeh re-elected as chief of Hamas

GAZA
The Islamic militant group Hamas on Sunday said it has re-elected its supreme leader. Ismail Haniyeh, who has been living in exile for the past two years, was given a new four-year term by the Shura Council, the Islamic group's top decision-making body. Haniyeh is a former aid to Hamas' founder, Ahmed Yassin, who was assassinated in an Israeli airstrike in 2004. He served as the Palestinian PM after Hamas won parliamentary elections in 2006. •AP

Kim's sister warns against S.Korea-U.S. military drill

'Move could affect recent thaw in ties'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
SEOUL

The influential sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un said on Sunday that a planned military exercise between Seoul and Washington would "becloud" relations, state-run media reported.

The warning comes amid a surprise thaw on the Korean peninsula, prompted by a series of personal letters between Mr. Kim and South Korean President Moon Jae-in.

The two sides on Tuesday restored communications that were severed more than a year ago, announcing



Kim Yo-jong

their leaders had agreed to work on improving ties.

But Kim Yo-jong - a key adviser to her brother the North Korean leader - warned the mood could shift if the South holds joint military drills with the United States later this month.

Pak. finalises Bill to grant new status to Gilgit-Baltistan: report

India opposed to any change in 'illegally occupied territories'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ISLAMABAD

Pakistani authorities have finalised a law to award provisional provincial status to strategically located Gilgit-Baltistan, a media report said on Sunday.

India has clearly conveyed to Pakistan that the entire Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, including the areas of Gilgit and Baltistan, are an integral part of the country by virtue of its fully legal and irrevocable accession.

India maintains the Government of Pakistan or its

judiciary has no locus standi on territories illegally and forcibly occupied by it.

Dawn newspaper reported that under the proposed law by the Ministry of Law and Justice, the Supreme Appellate Court (SAC) of Gilgit-Baltistan may be abolished and the region's election commission is likely to be merged with the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

Sources in the Law Ministry told the newspaper that the draft of the Bill titled "26th Constitutional Amendment Bill" had been pre-

pared and submitted to Prime Minister Imran Khan.

According to the sources, the draft Bill has been prepared after careful reading of the Constitution of Pakistan, international laws, the UN resolutions especially those related to a plebiscite on Kashmir, comparative constitutional laws and local legislation.

The stakeholders, including the governments of Gilgit-Baltistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, had been consulted on the proposed constitutional amendment, the report quoted sources.

Europe's vaccine cards meet resistance

Protests in Italy, France against making health passes mandatory for social activities

ASSOCIATED PRESS
VERONA

Shouts of "Liberty!" have echoed through the streets and squares of Italy and France as thousands show their opposition to plans to require vaccination cards for normal social activities, such as dining indoors at restaurants, visiting museums or cheering in sports stadiums.

Leaders in both countries see the cards, dubbed the "Green Pass" in Italy and the "health pass" in France, as necessary to boost vaccination rates and persuade the undecided.

Italian Premier Mario Draghi likened the anti-vaccination message from some political leaders to "an appeal to die."

The looming requirement is working, with vaccination requests booming in both countries.

Still, there are pockets of



Up in arms: Protesters marching in Paris against vaccination passes on Saturday. •AFP

resistance by those who see it as a violation of civil liberties or have concerns about vaccine safety. About 80,000 people protested in cities across Italy last weekend, while thousands have marched in Paris for the past three weekends, at times clashing with police. More than 200,000 marched across France on Saturday, 14,000 of them in Paris, in

the biggest show yet.

Denmark pioneered vaccine passes with little resistance. Belgium will require a vaccine certificate to attend outdoor events with more than 1,500 people by mid-August and indoor events by September.

Germany and Britain have so far resisted a blanket approach, while vaccinations are so popular in Spain that

incentives are not deemed necessary.

Many say vaccine pass requirements are a source of inequality that will further divide society, and they draw uneasy historic parallels.

"We are creating a great inequality between citizens," said Simone in Verona because he said he "feared for his livelihood." "We will have first-class citizens, who can access public services, the theater, social life, and second-class citizens, who cannot. This thing has led to apartheid and the Holocaust."

Holocaust survivors call the comparison a distortion of history. "They are madness, gestures in poor taste that intersect with ignorance," said Liliana Segre, a 90-year-old Holocaust survivor and Italian Senator for life.

New Zealand apologises for raids on Pacific people

Overstayers were 'unfairly targeted'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WELLINGTON

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern on Sunday formally apologised for police crackdowns in the 1970s that "unfairly targeted" the country's Pacific community.

The infamous "dawn raids" were carried out by officers and immigration officials, often accompanied by dogs, to arrest and deport individuals who had overstayed their work visas.

Pacific people comprised a third of overstayers but represented 86% of prosecutions, while Britons and Americans in New Zealand - who also comprised a third of overstayers - saw just 5% of prosecutions in the same period.

"Today, I stand on behalf

of the New Zealand government to offer a formal and unreserved apology to Pacific communities for the discriminatory implementation of the immigration laws of the 1970s," Ms. Ardern told a gathering of Pacific dignitaries in Auckland.

Minister for Pacific Peoples William Sio, who emigrated with his family from Samoa to New Zealand in 1969, described the raids as "racism of the worst kind."

Wellington encouraged migration from Pacific islands such as Samoa, Tonga and Fiji after Second World War to fill worker shortages as the economy expanded.

But those who migrated faced a backlash during the 1970s downturn, with claims they were taking jobs from New Zealanders.

U.S. eviction ban expires, putting millions at risk

Can't blame Republicans: Ocasio-Cortez

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON

Anger and frustration mounted in Congress over the weekend as a nationwide eviction moratorium expired during a surge in the COVID-19 pandemic. One Democratic lawmaker even camped outside the Capitol in protest.

Lawmakers said they were blindsided by President Joe Biden's inaction as the midnight Saturday deadline neared, some furious that he called on Congress to provide a last-minute solution to protect renters.

The rare division between the President and his party carried potential lasting political ramifications.

New York Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez said Sunday that Democrats have to

"call a spade a spade" after the deadline expired.

"We cannot in good faith blame the Republican Party when House Democrats have a majority," she said.

Ms. Ocasio-Cortez and other Democrats joined Rep. Cori Bush, D-Mo., on Saturday evening and overnight on Sunday as Ms. Bush camped outside the Capitol. "I don't plan to leave before some type of change happens," Ms. Bush said, though the House had already left for its August recess.

More than 3.6 million Americans are at risk of eviction. The moratorium was put in place by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention when jobs shifted and many workers lost income at the peak of COVID-19 crisis.

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ASK US



AARATI KRISHNAN

Q. I am a 21-year-old medical student. I have started a recurring deposit (RD) with the ₹1,000 that I save every month. Now, I want to start investing. What options would you suggest? Am I eligible to invest in stocks and mutual funds (MFs)? Since investment gains are subject to taxation, what rules will I be subjected to if I start investing at this age?

SHARAN D.

A. As you are 21 and a major, you can certainly invest in any instrument of your choice, including shares and mutual funds, irrespective of whether you are employed or not. You will, of course, need to meet the KYC requirement specified for each type of investment. Usually, if you have a PAN card and an Aadhaar for proof of address, this should suffice for most investments, along with the account opening form.

Apart from bank RDs, you can consider small savings schemes operated by India Post. These are absolutely safe investments backed by the Government of India. India Post offers 1-, 2-, 3- and 5-year fixed deposits, a recurring deposit account, a 5-year monthly income account, a 5-year National Savings Certificate where your interest compounds until maturity, a 15-year Public Provident Fund and many other options that offer a guaranteed return.

There are also deposit products from Non-Banking Financial Companies such as HDFC and Sundaram Finance that offer fixed returns if you lock in for 1, 2, 3 or 5 years. The interest you earn on both post office schemes and NBFC deposits are treated as your income and taxed at the income tax slab rate applicable to you each year.

MFs are riskier investment vehicles that deliver returns based on movements in market prices of the assets they invest in. You can invest either through monthly instalments (called Systematic Investment Plans or SIPs) or through one-time investments. There are different types of MFs carrying differing risk profiles, from those that invest in large-, mid- and small-cap stocks to those that invest in safer options such as bonds. The key advantage of open-end MFs is that they offer anytime liquidity as you can sell your units to the MF whenever you need to exit. The dividends received from MFs are taxed in your hands at your I-T slab rate. The capital gains are taxed as short-term or long-term capital gains, based on how long you hold the fund.

When you buy shares, you get to own a share of the business which entitles you to dividends from the company and share price appreciation, if any, when you sell the shares. Dividends are taxable in your hands as income and capital appreciation as short term or long-term capital gains (after one year of holding).

As you have no income from an occupation, you will need to add up all your incomes from stipend, dividends from MFs and shares, interest from deposits and short-term capital gains from any sale of MFs and shares to arrive at your gross taxable income. If your taxable income is up to ₹2.5 lakh in a year, you are not liable to pay any I-T. For income beyond ₹2.5 lakh up to ₹5 lakh, you pay tax at 5%. For income beyond ₹5 lakh and up to ₹10 lakh, you pay tax at a 20% rate. To save tax, you can also invest in instruments under section 80C of the I-T, which allow you to claim up to ₹1.5 lakh in annual deduction from your gross taxable income. Certain post office schemes and ELSS MFs are eligible for this deduction. In effect, up to ₹4 lakh of your income can be exempt from I-T in a year provided you are able to use 80C effectively.

However, tax savings should not be your only objective while choosing investments. Before choosing them, you need to be clear on three things – the financial goals towards which you are investing, the time horizons you have to achieve them and your risk appetite which is your ability to take losses or volatility in your returns. For holding periods of 7 years or less, you must consider deposit products, post office schemes and debt MFs. You should venture into shares or equity MFs only if you have a 7-year-plus horizon. Finally, tax can be levied on your MF or stock market investments once you become a taxpayer, as and when you sell units or shares and make capital gains.

Q. I am a senior citizen (81). I redeemed MFs in January this year. The total capital gain received was ₹13.30 lakh. My annual income is ₹17 lakh, from other sources. Can I get tax exemption for capital gains u/s 54 EC?

A.P. CHARI

N. Sree Kanth answers: With effect from April 1, 2019, capital gains arising from sale of land, building or both only are eligible for exemption under Section 54EC of the I-T Act, 1961. The capital gains in your case are arising from the redemption of MFs due to which they are not eligible for exemption under Section 54EC of the I-T Act. Depending on the nature of the MF redeemed, the tax treatment will vary and accordingly, will have to be included in your total income.

Q. Please clarify whether total income (taxable income) or gross total income is to be taken into consideration for filing I-T returns. Also, is TDS applicable to each branch for bank deposit interest?

A.R.K. SUNDARAM

A. For filing returns for individuals under Sec. 139 of the I-T Act, total taxable income will be considered to determine it exceeds the maximum amount not chargeable to I-T.

Under Section 194A of the Act, the words 'a banking company' is used, due to which the limits for non-deduction applies to each banking company and not branch wise.

(N. Sree Kanth is partner, GSS & Associates, Chartered Accountants, Chennai)

Readers can send in queries on personal finance and investing to moneywise@thehindu.co.in. Our experts who write on personal finance will answer these queries. Moneywise will not give specific recommendations for investment in a particular mutual fund scheme, share or fixed deposit.

Let your life cover strategy age well

A term insurance plan needs to be reviewed and added to at different stages in life

SAJJA PRAVEEN CHOWDARY

We all will agree with the premise that our financial goals and needs keep changing at different phases of our lives. To stay financially secure during all these phases, it is important to have a term life insurance plan. Term insurance that provides a huge life cover at a very small premium (For example ₹1 crore life cover for next 30 years at ₹500 per month) is a critical tool that provides a safety net to ensure the financial stability of the family. To keep pace with changing financial needs, it is also important to keep reviewing insurance plans as well.

Term insurance is never a one-time decision and it is important to review the coverage as you age. This is important to make sure that the future needs of the dependents are met adequately. Here is a quick look at the stages of your life when you should review term-insurance cover.

Young and single

Your career has probably just begun. While you may feel that you do not have any dependents unless your parents have already retired or you have a sibling who is dependent on you, this is the right time to start insurance planning from multiple perspectives. A very simple and fundamental aspect that many do not realise is that you can get insured easily when the per-

ceived risk is low but the aspect is ignored by most. Also, when the risk is higher, everyone tends to run towards insurance but it gets tougher to get covered.

At a young and healthy age, you can get a term insurance very easily with very few checks. Even the premium will be very low. As you grow older, there is an inherent risk of health-related issues and any external accidents that may make it tough to get cover at a later stage at a good price. Take advantage of the younger age and health condition and purchase a plan that can cover yourself and an education loan, if any. In addition, while your parents may not be dependent on you at this stage, you would have, for sure, wanted them to live their retired life without a tight financial budget or live in a much better financial position than your income would have ensured. A term insurance policy that you take at such an age



• GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK.

Term insurance is never a one-time decision and it is important to review the coverage as you age. This is important to make sure that all future needs of dependents are met comfortably

can take care of this aspect in case of any unforeseen event.

Marriage, children

When you turn about 30, chances are quite high that you are married and have very young children. Salaried professionals would have reached

mid-managerial level and self-employed individuals would be enjoying a stable income inflow. On the personal front, you may also have retired and dependent parents. At this point, you would be surrounded by multiple liabilities and it is important to have adequate cover-

age to pay for all such liabilities. It is important to have a significant cover to pay for all possible expenses of your family. Get your coverage enhanced to ₹1 crore for overall protection and coverage up to your retirement age or your earning capacity.

Late 40s, early 50s

When an individual reaches late forties and early fifties, he or she is likely in a senior managerial role while business owners are potentially looking to expand their businesses. At such an age, the income of an individual increases significantly and there is a proportionate rise in expenses as well. This is mostly because the children are grown up and are at the stage of incurring major, one-time expenses such as their weddings or considering higher education. In addition, it might be possible that you take a loan for such expenses or buy a home for your family. All these expenses make it essential that you enhance the

sum assured of your term cover so that all expenses are met comfortably even in your absence. At this stage of life, the average person is best advised to get term cover worth at least ₹1.5 crore.

The right cover

Ideally, when buying a term insurance plan, it is always advisable to buy a policy with a coverage amount/sum assured up to 12 - 15 times of your annual income. Apart from this, there are other factors that must be given due consideration when deciding on the coverage amount. Forgetting to factor in loan outstanding is common as the EMI is automatically debited monthly but the outstanding loan may still be significant. Retirement planning for the spouse, medical emergencies and everyday expenses all need to be thought through. It is important to know all your liabilities while planning to buy a term insurance plan.

The need for term-insurance coverage usually peaks when you are in the middle of your career and have liabilities to pay. It is therefore advised to buy a plan as early as possible so that you can lock in the highest coverage possible at minimum prices. Waiting to buy term insurance till liabilities add up on your shoulders may sometimes prove costly.

(The writer is Business Unit Head-Term Insurance, Policy-Bazaar.com)

THINK INVESTOR: GOVT. BONDS

Do you want to bond with the best?

An investor must mull finer points before choosing government bonds over bank FDs

VENKATESH BANGARUSWAMY

The RBI recently released the features of Retail Direct Gilt Account as part of its (and the government's) initiative to encourage retail participation in government bonds.

The question is: should you invest in government bonds? In this article, we discuss the benefits and the issues associated with such investments. For the purpose of our discussion, we will assume that you are investing to achieve a life goal. We also assume that, at present, your preferred choice for bond investment is bank deposits.

Interest-rate risk

You are exposed to interest-rate risk when you invest in bond mutual funds or any bond investment that generates capital appreciation. The risk is that bond prices typically decline when interest rate rises (or in anticipation of rates going up). You are not exposed to this risk if you invest in bank deposits because you earn only interest income.

Now, direct investment in government bonds also protects you from interest rate risk. How? True, government bonds trade in the market and offer opportunities for capital appreciation. But you can choose to earn only interest income by keeping these bonds till maturity and receive the par value from the government. It



While bank deposits expose the investor to small credit risk, government bonds are typically risk free. • GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

is possible that you may have to pay a premium to buy these bonds. The point, however, is that you need not bother about prices going down during the life of the bonds. And, of course, government bonds do not have credit risk. So, you can be confident of getting back the par value at maturity.

The upshot? Government bonds offer stable income, just as bank deposits do, and typically without credit risk. But before you do decide to invest, consider an important risk associated with such investments.

Reinvestment risk

Suppose you want to accumulate ₹15 lakh in 10 years. Assuming you have ₹10 lakh today, you must invest in a product earning 4% per annum to ac-

cumulate ₹15 lakh in 10 years. Suppose, you invest in a 10-year government bond offering 4% post-tax interest income. It seems that you are all set to achieve your goal. But unwittingly, you have exposed yourself to reinvestment risk.

To accumulate ₹15 lakh in 10 years, you need to earn 4% on a compounded annual basis. So, the interest income you earn every year must be reinvested at 4% till the tenth year. The issue is that RBI could lower the interest rate in any of the intermediate years. And, that would mean you cannot reinvest at 4%. Referred to as reinvestment risk, this risk, if not managed well, can set you on a path to failure to meet a life goal.

Suffice it to understand that the more frequent the interest payments, the greater the rein-

vestment risk. Now, government bonds pay every half-year. So, this risk could be greater with government bonds than comparable bonds paying interest rate annually.

Conclusion

You should directly invest in government bonds if you are excited about the newer investment avenue. But, you should consider the following points if your objective is to invest in government bonds for achieving a life goal:

First, both government bonds (if held till maturity) and bank deposits do not carry interest rate risk.

Second, government bonds expose you to reinvestment risk. Bank deposits do not, if you invest in cumulative fixed deposits (for lump sum money) and recurring deposits (for savings from monthly income).

Third, you can invest anytime in deposits and match the maturity of your deposits with the time horizon for your life goal. With government bonds, your primary investment is dependent on when RBI holds auctions, and the bond maturity offered in each auction.

Finally, bank deposits expose you to small credit risk whereas government bonds are typically credit-risk free.

(The author offers training programmes for individuals for managing personal investments)

TECH TRAIL: PRECIOUS METALS

Gold gleams, silver struggles

B. KRISHNAKUMAR

Precious metals remained broadly range bound in July. After a distinctly weak performance in June, Comex gold managed to close in the green.

The U.S. Federal Reserve's dovish stance on interest rates and the soft trend in the U.S. dollar helped gold prices recover in July. Comex gold gained 2.6% to close at \$1,817.2 an ounce. But Comex silver lost 2.5% to \$25.45 an ounce.

Mirroring the global trend, MCX gold futures gained 1.9% to close at ₹48,001 per 10 gm. MCX silver futures closed 1.8% lower at ₹67,847 per kg.

The short-term outlook for Comex gold is positive. The price may rise to the immediate target range of \$1,870-1,880. A move past \$1,837 would confirm the positive outlook. This outlook would be under threat if the price closes below the immediate support at \$1,740-1,750. Until this is breached, there would be a case for a move to \$1,880 and higher. A drop below \$1,740 may impart weakness and the price could then slide to \$1,650-1,660.

The price of Comex silver has been confined to a range and the near-term outlook depends on the direction of the breakout from this range. A move above \$26.8 would be a sign of strength and may propel silver price to the next target of \$27.5-28. However, a fall below \$24 would be a sign of weakness and it could then slip to the downside target of \$22-22.5.



Though MCX gold closed on a positive note in July, the price is still confined to a range. The short-term outlook hinges on the direction of the breakout from this range. A move above ₹49,000 would be a sign of strength and it could then rise to the major target at ₹51,250-51,300. A close below ₹47,300 would be a sign of weakness and could push the price to ₹43,500-44,000.

The near-term outlook for MCX silver is negative. It could slide to the immediate target range of ₹63,000-63,500. This view would be invalidated if the price moves above ₹70,000-70,500. A close below ₹65,900 would strengthen the case for a slide to ₹63,500 and lower.

To summarise, the short-term outlook for precious metals is unclear. A breakout from the levels mentioned would influence the direction of the short-term move.

(The author is a Chennai-based analyst / trader. This is not meant to be trading or investment advice)

Bank fixed deposit rates

Bank Name	Interest Rates (%)			
	Highest Slab	1-year tenure	3-year tenure	5-year tenure

SMALL FINANCE BANKS

Utkarsh Small Finance Bank	6.75	6.25	6.00	6.00
Suryoday Small Finance Bank	6.75	6.50	6.25	6.25
Ujjivan Small Finance Bank	6.75	6.50	6.75	6.75
Jana Small Finance Bank	6.75	6.25	6.50	6.50
Equitas Small Finance Bank	6.50	6.35	6.35	6.25
Fincare Small Finance Bank	6.50	5.60	6.25	6.00
ESAF Small Finance Bank	6.50	6.50	5.75	5.25
AU Small Finance Bank	6.25	5.00	6.25	6.00
Capital Small Finance Bank	6.25	6.00	6.00	6.00

PRIVATE SECTOR BANKS

DCB Bank	6.50	5.80	6.50	6.50
RBL Bank	6.50	6.10	6.30	6.50
State Bank of Mauritius	6.50	6.50	6.50	6.00
IndusInd Bank	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00
Nainital Bank	6.35	5.25	5.35	5.35
IDFC First Bank	6.00	5.50	5.75	6.00
Karur Vysya Bank	6.00	5.25	5.50	5.75
CSB Bank	5.75	5.00	5.25	5.25
Axis Bank	5.75	5.10	5.40	5.75
South Indian Bank	5.65	5.40	5.50	5.65
Tamilnad Mercantile Bank	5.60	5.50	5.25	5.25
Karnataka Bank	5.60	5.20	5.50	5.50
Dhanlaxmi Bank	5.60	5.25	5.40	5.50

Bank Name	Interest Rates (%)			
	Highest Slab	1-year tenure	3-year tenure	5-year tenure

PUBLIC SECTOR BANKS

Bandhan Bank	5.50	5.50	5.25	5.00
HDFC Bank	5.50	4.90	5.15	5.30
ICICI Bank	5.50	4.90	5.15	5.35
DBS Bank	5.50	4.25	5.50	5.50
Jammu & Kashmir Bank	5.30	5.10	5.30	5.30
Kotak Mahindra Bank	5.25	4.50	5.10	5.25

FOREIGN BANKS

Deutsche Bank	6.25	3.85	4.50	6.25
HSBC Bank	4.00	3.10	4.00	4.00
CitiBank	3.50	2.75	3.50	3.50

Home loan interest rates

Name of Lender	Loan Amount (Rs.)		
	Upto 30 lakh	Above 30 lakh & upto 75 lakh	Above 75 lakh

PUBLIC SECTOR BANKS

Punjab & Sind Bank	6.65-7.60	6.65-7.60	6.65-7.60
State Bank of India	6.70-7.50	6.95-7.65	7.05-7.75
Bank of Baroda	6.75-8.35	6.75-8.35	6.75-8.60
Union Bank of India	6.80-7.60	6.90-7.65	6.90-7.65
Punjab National Bank	6.80-7.75	6.80-7.90	6.80-8.00
Central Bank of India	6.85-7.30	6.85-7.30	6.85-7.30
Bank of India	6.85-8.35	6.85-8.35	6.85-8.35
Canara Bank	6.90-8.90	6.90-8.90	6.90-8.90
UCO Bank	6.90-7.00	6.90-7.00	6.90-7.00
Bank of Maharashtra	6.90-8.05	6.90-8.40	6.90-8.40
IDBI Bank*	6.95-10.05	6.95-10.05	6.95-10.05
Indian Bank**	7.00-7.25	7.10-7.35	7.20-7.40
Indian Overseas Bank	7.05	7.15	7.30

PRIVATE SECTOR BANKS

Kotak Mahindra Bank ^	6.65-7.20	6.65-7.20	6.65-7.20
ICICI Bank ^^	6.75-7.30	6.75-7.45	7.10-7.55
Axis Bank	6.90-11.50	6.90-11.50	6.90-8.55
HSBC Bank^^^	7.20-7.75	7.20-7.75	7.20-7.75
South Indian Bank	7.25-10.00	7.25-10.00	7.25-10.00
Karur Vysya Bank	7.35-9.55	7.35-9.55	7.35-9.55
Karnataka Bank	7.50-8.75	7.50-8.75	7.50-8.85
Federal Bank	7.65-7.70	7.70-7.75	7.75-7.80
Dhanlaxmi Bank	7.85-9.00	7.85-9.00	7.85-9.00
Tamilnad Mercantile Bank	8.25	8.25	8.25
Bandhan Bank	8.50-11.75	8.50-11.25	8.75-11.25
RBL Bank	10.20-12.80	10.20-10.70	9.50-10.00

Name of Lender	Loan Amount (Rs.)		
	Upto 30 lakh	Above 30 lakh & upto 75 lakh	Above 75 lakh

HOUSING FINANCE COMPANIES (HFCS)

LIC Housing	6.66-7.85	6.66-8.05	6.90-8.05
HDFC Ltd.***	6.75-7.45	7.00-7.70	7.10-7.80
Bajaj Finserv	6.75-8.50	6.75-8.50	6.75-8.50
Tata Capital	>=6.90	>=6.90	>=6.90
PNB Housing	7.35-9.35	7.35-9.55	7.70-9.55
GIC Housing Finance	>=7.45	>=7.45	>=7.45
Recco Home Finance	>=7.75	>=7.75	>=7.75
Indiabulls Housing	>=8.65	>=8.65	>=8.65
Aditya Birla Capital	9.00-12.50	9.00-12.50	9.00-12.50
Reliance Home Finance	9.75-13.00	9.75-13.00	9.75-11.00

*10 bps concession for women borrowers under limited period offer. Conditions apply.

**Interest rate of 6.85%-7.00% p.a. offered under IND AWAS Scheme

Dressel, McKeon leave in a blaze of glory

USA betters own world record in the men's 4x100m medley relay



Superman: Caeleb Dressel joined a very exclusive club of five-gold winners at a single edition. •REUTERS



Mermaid: Emma McKeon's tally of seven medals is the best ever by a woman swimmer. •REUTERS

TOKYO OLYMPICS

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
TOKYO

Caeleb Dressel won two more titles on Sunday to end his Tokyo campaign with five golds, as Australia's Emma McKeon became the first woman swimmer to win seven medals at a single Olympics.

Fantastic efforts

Dressel earned the title of world's fastest swimmer with a lightning 21.07 seconds in the 50m freestyle

before helping the US men shatter their own world record in the 4x100m medley relay.

McKeon was just as impressive, blasting through the 50m in 23.81s then spearheading Australia to the medley relay honours on the final day of action. It boosted her medal tally to seven — four gold and three bronze — surpassing the six won by East German Kristin Otto (1952) and American Natalie Coughlin (2008).

McKeon also matched the

SWIMMING

record for the most decorated female athlete at a single Games ever, tied with Russian gymnast Maria Gorokhovskaya (1952).

Like McKeon, Dressel took the 50-100 freestyle double, but also powered to the 100m butterfly title in world-record time, while adding 4x100m free and medley relays to thrust himself into rarified company.

He joins Americans Michael Phelps, Mark Spitz and

Matt Biondi, and Otto, as the only swimmers to win five or more golds at one Games.

While the US again topped the medals table with 30, including 11 gold, second-placed Australia had 20 medals, nine of them gold.

Dressel and McKeon returned for the event-closing relays with Dressel delivering a storming butterfly leg to steer the US to a world-record 3:26.78s. That shattered US's own global mark of 3:27.28s set at the 2009 World Championships, with

Adam Peaty's Britain taking silver ahead of Italy.

In the women's relay, McKeon swam the fly for Australia, which came home in an Olympic-record 3:51.60s to upset two-time defending champion USA. Canada was third.

Distance double

America's Robert Finke overcame fatigue to secure the Olympic distance double by winning the men's 1500m gold medal to go with his 800m title.

Support system behind Sindhu's medal journey

Suchitra Academy played a big part in her success

BADMINTON

V.V. SUBRAHMANYAM

It was a moment of delight at the Suchitra Academy. Pradeep Raju, Praveen Raju, trainer Srikanth Verma and the young badminton players, who had sparred with P.V. Sindhu in the lead up to the Tokyo Olympics, have played an important role behind Sindhu's bronze medal-winning feat at the Tokyo Olympics.

"Yes, we were definitely disappointed after Sindhu's loss to Tai Tzu-ying in the semifinal. Now we're glad that she pulled off another memorable performance," said Pradeep, who has been working with Sindhu's coach Park Tae Sang since February this year.

"Sindhu has been with us since 2017. When she started her quest for the Olympic gold after her below-par performances in the three tour-



Helping hands: P.V. Sindhu along with physio B. Evangeline, Pradeep Raju of Suchitra Academy and fitness trainer Srikanth Verma at the academy. •FILE PHOTO

naments in Thailand, including the Super Series final, she wanted to prove a point to herself and the world," said Pradeep.

"From the Suchitra Badminton Academy, the senior-most strength and conditioning trainer and a physio travelled with Sindhu," Pradeep said. "We have given inputs to

the strength and conditioning team, and she is now faster and leaner. She had match simulations where she played from positions like 16-0, 17-20, 18-20. If you see this helped her against Akane Yamaguchi in the quarterfinal in the first game," Pradeep said.

"We ran video analysis on her game and all her possible

opponents to ensure she understands and adapt very easily to every style of play," Pradeep said.

"Despite pandemic throwing the tournament structure haywire, it worked in Sindhu's because it gave her enough time to learn new strokes like slow drop and the half-smashes," he said.

TV PICKS

TNPL 2021: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m.

Tokyo 2020: Sony Ten 2, 3 & Sony Six (SD & HD), 5.30 a.m. onwards (Tuesday)

Bailey to lead CA's selection panel

ANI
MELBOURNE

The Cricket Australia Board on Sunday endorsed the appointment of former Australian captain George Bailey as chair of the National Selection Panel (NSP) to replace the retiring Trevor Hohns.

Ben Oliver, Cricket Australia's Executive General Manager, High Performance and National Teams, said the search had begun for a third-panel member to join Bailey and head coach Justin Langer.

George is a highly respected leader who is now well established on the NSP alongside Justin as the head coach. He has brought recent playing experience with a deep understanding of the game, an open and collaborative style, and a desire to keep improving the selection function.

The third-panel member will add to their combined experience as we look for someone who will bring complementary skills along with their own perspective and diversity of thinking," said Oliver in an official statement. Bailey said he was looking forward to the new role.

Smashing Blue wins Sultan Pheroze Plate

HYDERABAD: R.H. Sequeira-trained Smashing Blue (Akshay Kumar) won the Sultan Pheroze Plate, the feature event of Sunday's (Aug.1) races here. The winner is owned by Mr. Rama Seshu Eyyunni & Mr. P. Prabhakar Reddy. Sequeira saddled two more winners on the day, while Akshay Kumar stole the limelight by winning five races.

1. ROYSTON ROCK PLATE (1,200m) (Terms) Maiden, 3-y-o only (Cat. II); **KEYSTONE** (Akshay Kumar) 1, Galwan (Nikhil Naidu) 2, Jean Lafette (R. Ajinkya) 3 and Zeus (Trevor) 4. 1-1/2, 2 and 2. Im, 14.01s. ₹12 (w), 12, 16 and 29 (p). SHP: 48, THP: 76, FP: 63, Q: 68, Tanala: 967. Favourite: Keystone. Owners: Mr. Tegbir Singh Brar rep. Sarinaga Racing Pvt. Ltd. Trainer: R.H. Sequeira.

2. FAIR TRIAL PLATE (DIV. II) (1,200m) rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III); **CASTLE ROCK** (Ajeeth Kumar) 1, All Time Legend (Akshay Kumar) 2,

Blue Valentine (Trevor) 3 and Red River (R.S. Jodha) 4. Not run: Crackershow. 1-1/2, 3 and 3. Im, 14.57s. ₹40 (w), 13, 10 and 10 (p). SHP: 33, THP: 55, FP: 152, Q: 58, Tanala: 300. Favourite: All Time Legend. Owners: Mr. Rajat Parthasarthy, Mr. Rajat Parthasarthy, Mr. V. Krishna Das & Mr. Veeramachaneni Bharat. Trainer: D. Netto.

3. FAIR TRIAL PLATE (DIV. I) (1,200m), rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III); **SPINITY** (Akshay Kumar) 1, Mandala Bay (Trevor) 2, Story Teller (R.S. Jodha) 3 and The Prospect (A.A. Vikrant) 4. Not run: Kingston. 5-1/2, Nk and 1-1/2. Im, 13.60s. ₹23 (w), 11, 10 and 36 (p). SHP: 39, THP: 85, FP: 59, Q: 16, Tanala: 509. Favourite: Mandala Bay. Owner: Mr. Akshay Karan. Trainer: Ananta Vatsalya.

4. ANAB E SHAHI PLATE (DIV. I) (1,200m), rated up to 25 (Cat. III); **BATTLE READY** (Akshay Kumar) 1, Air Salute (N.B. Kuldeep) 2, Misty

River (Gaurav Singh) 3 and Academic Angel (G. Naresh) 4. Nk, 2 and Sh. Im, 15.78s. ₹21 (w), 14, 17 and 28 (p). SHP: 43, THP: 81, FP: 91, Q: 72, Tanala: 632. Favourite: Battle Ready. Owners: Mr. C. Parthasarthy, Mr. Rajat Parthasarthy, Mr. V. Krishna Das & Mr. Veeramachaneni Bharat. Trainer: D. Netto.

5. SULTAN PHEROZE PLATE (1,200m) rated 80 and above (Cat. I); **SMASHING BLUE** (Akshay Kumar) 1, Corfe Castle (Gaurav Singh) 2, Trump Girl (Abhay Singh) 3 and Lightning Bolt (Trevor) 4. Sh, Nk and 2-1/2. Im, 13.26s. ₹23 (w), 10, 13 and 40 (p). SHP: 37, THP: 131, FP: 70, Q: 39, Tanala: 1,293. Favourite: Lightning Bolt. Owners: Mr. Rama Seshu Eyyunni & Mr. P. Prabhakar Reddy. Trainer: R.H. Sequeira.

6. FAIRWAY PLATE (1,600m) rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III); **LAMHA** (Akshay Kumar) 1, Grand Finale (B.R. Ku-

mar) 2, Campana (Trevor) 3 and Advance Guard (Nikhil Naidu) 4. Not run: Best Buddy. 3/4, 1 and 3. Im, 42.90s. ₹22 (w), 10, 20 and 11 (p). SHP: 82, THP: 68, FP: 316, Q: 173, Tanala: 558. Favourite: Campana. Owners: Mr. Rama Seshu Eyyunni & Mr. Marthand Singh Mahindra. Trainer: R.H. Sequeira.

7. ANAB E SHAHI PLATE (DIV. II) (1,200m) rated up to 25 (Cat. III); **SHELDON** (G. Naresh) 1, N R 1 Touch (Akshay Kumar) 2, Hip Hop (C.P. Bopanna) 3 and Let It Be Me (B.R. Kumar) 4. 3-1/4, Hd and Nk. Im, 14.40s. ₹370 (w), 51, 14 and 129 (p). SHP: 38, THP: 401, FP: 1,834, Q: 645, Tanala: 87,174. Favourite: Due Diligence. Owner: Mr. Mukund Kakani. Trainer: K.S.V. Prasad Raju.

Jackpot: 70% ₹47,775 (7 tkts.) and 30% 201 (713 tkts.); Treble: (i) 251 (224 tkts.), (ii) 2,143 (24 tkts.); Mini Jackpot: (i) 439 (76 tkts.), (ii) 11,145 (5 tkts.).

Tennis physio comes to wrestlers rescue

KAMESH SRINIVASAN
NEW DELHI

The presence of physio Anand Dubey has helped the Indian Olympic Association solve a problem for the wrestling team at the Olympics.

The experienced Anand had travelled as Sania Mirza and Ankita Raina's physio after the tennis team opted for him rather than a coach when it was allowed only one support staff.

Meanwhile, the wrestling squad had one physio who could only enter the training venue and was not staying in the village.

The early exit of the tennis players led to the IOA converting Anand's tennis accreditation to all access. He was already staying at the athletes village and thus has been able to immediately help the wrestlers.

Anand — part of the Indian Fed Cup and Davis Cup teams over the years — has an extended service in the Commonwealth Games and Asian Games.

Zverev's dream run ends in gold

Krejčíková-Siniakova pair triumphs



Did I just?!: Alexander Zverev after beating Karen Khachanov in the final. •REUTERS

TENNIS

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
TOKYO

Alexander Zverev brushed aside Karen Khachanov in straight sets on Sunday to seal the Olympic men's singles title and win Germany's first tennis gold since 1992.

The fourth seed produced a dominant display to win 6-3, 6-1 in 79 minutes.

Zverev becomes only the second German to win an Olympic singles gold after Steffi Graf in 1988, while Boris Becker and Michael Stich

took the men's doubles crown four years later.

Barbora Krejčíková and Katerina Siniakova of the Czech Republic added the women's doubles gold to their French Open crown by beating Swiss singles champion Belinda Bencic and Viktorija Golubic 7-5, 6-1.

Krejčíková, who also won the Roland Garros singles trophy earlier this year, and Siniakova had needed deciding tie-breaks in their last three matches, but were dominant against Bencic and Golubic.

TOKYO TITBITS

Dolgopyat brings cheer to Israel

Artem Dolgopyat assured his place in Israel's sports history by winning the floor exercise to claim the country's first ever gymnastics medal on Sunday. In other events Max Whitlock defended his pommel horse title, Rebeca Andrade succeeded Simone Biles as vault champion and World champion Nina Derwael hopped up onto the uneven bars to end Belgium's wait for a gymnastics gold.



Artem Dolgopyat...tumbling to victory. •GETTY IMAGES

Lahiri T-42 and Mane 56th as Schaufele takes gold
Golfer Anirban Lahiri shot a final-round 72 for a tally of 279 to finish tied 42nd in the 60-player field at the Olympic Games on Sunday, while compatriot Udayan Mane also shot 72 for a 287 and end up 56th. Overnight leader Xander Schauffele (USA, 266) won gold ahead of Rory Sabbatini (Slovakia, 267) and C.T. Pan (Chinese Taipei, 269).

Satish goes down to World champion Jalolov
Satish Kumar lost to World

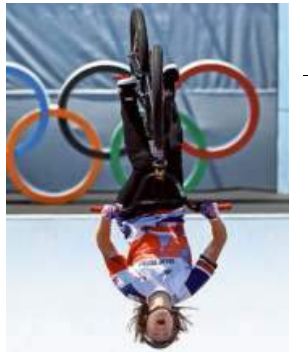
champion and top seed Bakhodir Jalolov of Uzbekistan 5-0 in the +91kg quarterfinal clash on Sunday. Armyman Satish, the first Indian super heavyweight boxer to qualify for the Games, won the hearts with a courageous performance. Even Jalolov acknowledged Satish's brave effort after the end of the bout.

Tingmao's reign continues
China's Shi Tingmao claimed her second gold medal at the Tokyo Olympics with victory in the

women's 3 metre springboard diving on Sunday, becoming the second woman to retain both individual and synchronised titles.

Worthington serves it up in BMX freestyle

Former chef Charlotte Worthington served up the ride of her life as the Briton became the first-ever Olympic champion in BMX freestyle on Sunday. Australia's Men's favourite Logan Martin won the men's event.



Worthington...defying gravity. •REUTERS

Mixed results for Indians

Humpy finds going tough

CHESS

RAKESH RAO
NEW DELHI

B. Adhiban and P. Harikrishna kept alive their chances of qualifying for the quarter-finals, but K. Humpy found the going tough on the opening day of the \$100,000 Chessable Masters online rapid chess tournament on Saturday.

After five rounds of the round-robin phase in the 16-player field, Adhiban (3

points), Harikrishna (2.5) and Humpy (1) had their task cut out for the remaining 10 rounds.

The results (involving Indians):
Fifth round: B. Adhiban drew with P. Harikrishna; K. Humpy drew with Abhimanyu Mishra (USA).

Fourth round: Vladislav Artemiev (Rus) bt Adhiban; Harikrishna drew with Shakharipar Mamedyarov (Aze); Hikaru Nakamura (USA) drew with Humpy.

Third round: Adhiban drew with Ju Wenjun (Chn); Le Quang Liem (Vie) drew with Harikrishna; Humpy lost to David Anton (Esp).
Second round: Eduardo Iturri-

zaga (Esp) lost to Adhiban; Harikrishna bt Humpy.

First round: Adhiban bt Aryan Tari (Nor); Nakamura bt Harikrishna; Humpy lost to Artemiev.

Standings (after five rounds):
1. Wesley So (USA, 4), 2-4. Vladislav Artemiev (Rus), Hikaru Nakamura (USA), Firouzja Alireza (Fra) (3.5 each); 5-9. Shakharipar Mamedyarov (Aze), Hikaru Nakamura (USA) drew with Humpy.
Third round: Adhiban drew with Ju Wenjun (Chn); Le Quang Liem (Vie) drew with Harikrishna; Humpy lost to David Anton (Esp).
Second round: Eduardo Iturri-

Pakistan edges Windies narrowly

Hafeez stars for the visitors; Pooran battles in vain

PAKISTAN IN WI

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
(PROVIDENCE, GUYANA)

Pakistan's bowlers did just enough to restrain a rampant Nicholas Pooran and come away with a seven-run victory over the West Indies in the second T20 International of the four-match series here on Saturday.

Pooran's explosive unbeaten 62 off 33 balls with six 6s and four 4s kept the West Indies in with a chance until the final over when 20 runs were required to overhaul Pakistan's 157 for eight.

However, Shaheen Shah Afridi dismissed captain Kieron Pollard and then denied Pooran to ensure the visitors were kept to 150 for four. Also, off-spinning all-rounder



Nicholas Pooran. •AFP

Mohammad Hafeez, bowling the first over, dismissed Andre Fletcher with his second ball and conceded just six runs in his four overs.

West Indies suffered another setback when open-

ing batsman Evin Lewis retired hurt on 35 midway through the innings.

Earlier, Jason Holder and Dwayne Bravo put the brakes on the Pakistan scoring rate.

Holder returned figures of 4/26 while Bravo claimed 2/24 as the tourists squandered a solid platform provided by Babar Azam and Mohammad Rizwan. Babar's polished 51 (58, 2x6, 4x4) was the top core of the innings.

The scores: Pakistan 157/8 in 20 overs (Mohammad Rizwan 46, Babar Azam 51; Jason Holder 4/26) bt West Indies 150/4 (Evin Lewis 35, Nicholas Pooran 62 n.o.).

Toss: West Indies.
MoM: Hafeez; **Pakistan** won by seven runs to lead four-match series 1-0.

HUNGARIAN GP

REUTERS
BUDAPEST

Frenchman Esteban Ocon fended off Sebastian Vettel to take a maiden Formula One win for Alpine in a chaotic Hungarian Grand Prix, that saw Lewis Hamilton charging through from last-to-third to retake the championship lead from tenth-placed Max Verstappen.

The 24-year-old Ocon crossed the line 1.8 seconds clear of his Aston Martin rival, while Hamilton narrowly caught the pair up but fell 2.7 seconds short.

Still, the Briton put himself six points clear of Verstappen, who scored just the sole point after being caught up in an opening lap



Thrilled: Esteban Ocon is joy personified. •GETTY IMAGES

incident. The Dutchman, who had made a good start on a wet track from second on the grid, was right behind Hamilton heading into the first corner when he was collected by McLaren's Lando Norris. The Briton was himself

tagged by the slow starting Mercedes of Valtteri Bottas that sent him sliding into the Red Bull.

The results: 1. Esteban Ocon (Alpine) 1:32:54.762s, 2. Sebastian Vettel (Aston Martin), +1.859s, 3. Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) +2.736, 4. Carlos

Sainz Jr. (Ferrari) +15.018, 5. Fernando Alonso (Alpine) +15.651, 6. Pierre Gasly (Alpha-Tauri) +1:03.614, 7. Yuki Tsunoda (Alpha-Tauri) +1:15.803; 8. Nicholas Latifi (Williams) +1:17.910, 9. George Russell (Williams) +1:19.094, 10. Max Verstappen (Red Bull) +1:20.244. **1 lap:** 11. Kimi Raikkonen (Alfa Romeo); 12. Daniel Ricciardo (McLaren); 13. Mick Schumacher (Haas); 14. Antonio Giovinazzi (Alfa Romeo); **DNF:** 15. Nikita Mazepin (Haas), Lando Norris (McLaren), Sergio Perez (Red Bull), Valtteri Bottas (Mercedes), Charles Leclerc (Ferrari), Lance Stroll (Aston Martin).

Standings: Drivers: 1. Hamilton 192 pts., 2. Verstappen 186, 3. Norris 113, 4. Bottas 108, 5. Perez 104; **Constructors:** 1. Red Bull 289, 2. Mercedes 285, 3. McLaren 163, 4. Ferrari 148, 5. AlphaTauri 49.