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**NEARBY**



**Akhilesh sees 400 seats in SP's kitty in 2022 polls**  
 LUCKNOW  
 Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Thursday said given the resentment among people towards the Yogi Adityanath government in U.P., his party could even win 400 out of 403 seats in 2022 Assembly polls.

NEWS PAGE 8

**Delhi terminates study on sources of pollution**

NEW DELHI  
 The Delhi government has terminated a study to find the sources of air pollutants on a real-time basis despite paying over ₹88 lakh for it, according to a government letter. The study was allotted on a "nomination basis" without an open tender to the University of Washington.

CITY PAGE 4

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**This year, BJP's focus on free ration in U.P.**

OMAR RASHID  
 LUCKNOW

If Narendra Modi-led BJP dedicated August 5 last year — exactly a year after changing the constitutional status of Jammu and Kashmir in 2019 — to launch the construction of the Ram Mandir, this year the day marked the government's emphasis on free ration to the poor in poll-bound Uttar Pradesh.

DETAILS ON PAGE 8

## Allegations serious, truth has to come out in snooping issue: SC

Bench directs petitioners to serve copies of their petitions on the government

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL  
 NEW DELHI  
 The Supreme Court on Thursday made it clear that "truth has to come out" in the Pegasus snooping issue. A Bench of Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana and Justice Surya Kant said the allegations about the government using Israel-based technology to spy on civilians, journalists, Ministers, parliamentarians and activists were "no doubt serious", provided the news reports were true. The Bench directed the petitioners, including senior journalist N. Ram, the Editors Guild of India, Rajya Sabha member John Brittas

**No doubt allegations are serious if reports in the news are correct**

If you know your phone is hacked, why not file a criminal complaint?

Two years back, this case came to light... There was no serious concern then... Now it is suddenly highlighted...

**N.V. RAMANA**  
 CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA

and five journalists reported to be targeted by the Pegasus spyware, to serve copies of their petitions to the offices of the Attorney General of India and the Solicitor General. Former Union Minister Yashwant Sinha, represented by senior advocate Manish Tiwari, has also filed a petition. Listing the case for August 10, the Bench said it wanted the government to be repre-

sented in court in the next hearing. "Somebody should appear for the government," Chief Justice Ramana observed.

**No formal notice to govt.**  
 The court did not issue a formal notice to the government. Part of the court's reluctance was invited by a petition by advocate Manohar Lal Sharma, in which he has arraigned individuals as respondents.

Mr. Sharma has named Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah as personal parties in his petition.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



**Ecstasy and agony:** India's skipper Manpreet Singh celebrates as a German player lies on the ground after their bronze medal match in Tokyo on Thursday. India pipped Germany 5-4. PHOTO

## India beats Germany, bags bronze in men's hockey

Wrestler Ravi Kumar Dahiya wins silver in 57 kg division

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
 CHENNAI

A more than four-decade-long wait finally bore fruit. India last won an Olympic medal — a gold — at the 1980 Games in Moscow and after 41 years of fading hope and enduring angst, Manpreet Singh's men turned a corner.

On a pulsating Thursday in the Tokyo Games, India edged Germany 5-4 to secure bronze through the third-place play-off.

It was a moment equally invested with the present and the

warm tug of nostalgia. Hockey, India's national game, was once a sure-fire Olympic medal prospect and it showed in the trophy cabinet that has eight golds and one silver, besides three bronzes, including the latest addition.

**Indomitable Sreejesh**  
 India found its goalkeepers in Rupinder Pal Singh, Hardik Singh, Harmanpreet Singh and Simranjeet Singh, with the last-named striking twice. Yet at one point, India was trailing 1-3 before finding a second wind and surging ahead.

Germany was relentless but India did not budge and in goalkeeper P.R. Sreejesh, it had an indomitable wall that thwarted most rival advances. The way the team played also reflected the hard yards and strategy that coach Graham Reid infused into his wards.

If hockey offered unbridled joy, there was a silver to be savoured too as wrestler Ravi Kumar Dahiya emerged second-best to Russian Zaur Uguev in the freestyle 57 kg final bout.

MORE REPORTS PAGE 13, 14, 15, 16

## Centre moves to redact retrospective tax law

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
 NEW DELHI

The government on Thursday took the first step towards doing away with the contentious retrospective tax law of 2012, which was used to raise large tax demands on foreign investors such as Vodafone and Cairn Energy, and blamed for vitiating India's investment climate — less than a month after Cairn Energy secured an order from a French court to freeze India's assets in Paris.

**Retrospective tax clauses**  
 Union Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman introduced the Taxation Laws (Amendment) Bill in the Lok Sabha on Thursday to nullify the relevant retrospective tax clauses that were introduced in 2012 to bring past indirect transfer of Indian

assets under the ambit of taxation. As per the proposed changes, any tax demand made on transactions that took place before May 2012 shall be dropped, and any taxes already collected shall be repaid, albeit without interest. To be eligible, the concerned taxpayers would have to drop all pending cases against the government and promise not to make any demands for damages or costs.

Former Finance Minister, the late Pranab Mukherjee, had introduced the retrospective taxation power after the Supreme Court held that Vodafone could not be taxed for a 2007 transaction involving its purchase of a 67% stake in Hutchison Whampoa for \$11 billion.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

## Bigger share

Close to 88% of the undergraduate dropouts at IIT-Guwahati have been from reserved categories over the last five years, Lok Sabha data show. IITs with a higher share of dropouts from reserved categories

IITs	No. of dropouts	% from reserved categories
Guwahati	25	88%
Delhi	29	76%
Madras	10	70%
Kanpur	41	61%
Kharagpur	79	60%

## 60% of dropouts at 7 IITs from reserved categories

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
 NEW DELHI

Nearly 63% of the undergraduate dropouts at the top seven Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) over the past five years were from the reserved categories, according to Education Ministry data submitted in response to a question in the Rajya Sabha on Thursday.

Nearly 40% of the dropouts were from the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes. In some

institutions, the SC/ST share was as high as 72%.

**Disadvantaged groups**  
 This indicates that those who drop out of these elite programmes disproportionately belong to the disadvantaged groups, given that only half the undergraduate intake in the IITs are from the reserved categories, while about 23% are from the SC/ST communities.

IIT GUWAHATI PAGE 9

## Not prosecuting free oxygen suppliers, drug controller tells Delhi HC

Court says 'right approach' by the dept.

STAFF REPORTER  
 NEW DELHI

The Drugs Control Department informed the Delhi High Court on Thursday that it has decided not to prosecute those who were involved in supplying free oxygen cylinders to COVID-19 patients in the Capital during the second wave of the pandemic.

A Bench of Justices Vipin Sanghi and Jasmeet Singh said the stand taken by the department was the "right approach". Taking note of the submission, the court also decided to dispose of a petition seeking the lodging of an FIR on allegations that politicians were able to procure COVID medicines in huge quantities even as patients were running from pillar to post to get them.

**'No wrongful intention'**  
 Senior advocate Rahul Mehra, representing the Delhi government, said they have decided not to launch any prosecution against social organisations, individuals and gurdwaras which procured and distributed medi-

cal oxygen to COVID patients free of cost and without any wrongful intention.

Mr. Mehra said the pandemic is not yet over and if prosecution is launched in such cases, no good Samaritan would come forward in future to help the needy for fear of being punished.

In the previous hearing, the High Court had slammed the drug controller for initiating proceedings against AAP MLA Praveen Kumar for procuring and distributing oxygen cylinders during the second wave.

The court had said it would not permit prosecution of good Samaritans for helping society at a time when the state had failed to provide oxygen.

It, however, drew a distinction between the AAP MLA's case and that of BJP MP from East Delhi, Gautam Gambhir, who had stocked and distributed a large quantity of medicines to COVID-19 patients. The court remarked that Mr. Gambhir had "irresponsibly hoarded medicines" when people did not have access to them.

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## 'Can't find how leak in riots case happened'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

An enquiry has failed to establish how the details of investigation into a Delhi riots case were shared with media, Delhi Police has told the High Court in a status report on accused Asif Iqbal Tanha's plea alleging that the content of chargesheets was leaked even before cognisance was taken by the court.

Justice Mukta Gupta on Thursday said she would read Delhi Police's separate enquiry report received by her in a sealed cover and listed Mr. Tanha's plea for hearing on August 11.

Advocate Rajat Nair, appearing for Delhi Police, informed the court that the status report was also filed in the matter. In the status report, police said that while a "detailed enquiry" was conducted into the allegations, it could not be found how the alleged leakage took place.

## 'Toolkit' case: information not leaked to media, police tell HC

Disha Ravi had complained of probe material, data being reproduced in media

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Delhi Police on Thursday reiterated before the Delhi High Court that it did not leak to the media information related to its probe against climate change activist Disha Ravi, who allegedly shared a 'toolkit' on social media in connection with the ongoing farmers' protest against three farm laws.

In an affidavit, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (Cyber Cell Unit) of the Special Cell said the "allegation of the petitioner [Ms. Ravi] that the subject information [chats of the petitioner] has been leaked by the respondent no. 1 (police), is false and factually incorrect".

The police said no information or document forming part of the case file, including the subject chats, have been shared with any



Activist Disha Ravi being brought to the cyber cell office in Dwarka in New Delhi. ■ FILE PHOTO: SANDEEP SAXENA

media house or individual except the information communicated officially through press briefing or broadcast, which was a matter of record.

The submission came in response to a petition filed by Ms. Ravi, who complained that investigation material, data, including messages attributed to her, were being telecast and re-

produced in the media.

Ms. Ravi apprehends that the same have been leaked by the investigating agency to the media. She has sought protection against 'violation' of her privacy and her right to a fair trial.

### 'Media trial'

The petition stated that Ms. Disha "is severely aggrieved and prejudiced by the media

trial surrounding her arrest and the ongoing investigation, where she is being viscerally attacked by the respondent no. 1 [Special Cell, Delhi Police] and several media houses...on the basis of leaked investigative matter".

On February 19, the court ordered the police to ensure that there was no leakage of any documents relating to the investigation into the FIR against Ms. Ravi. It, however, said the police could conduct press briefings in relation to the case "as per law" so long as no rights of Ms. Disha were violated.

The court has listed the case for hearing on September 27.

The 22-year-old Ms. Disha was arrested in Bengaluru on February 13, 2021, and brought to the Capital. She was granted bail by a local court on February 23.

## St. Stephen's College begins admissions for UG courses

Portal to open till August 31; final list after online interviews

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Delhi University's St. Stephen's College began its admission process for the various undergraduate courses on Thursday. The online application portal will close on August 31, according to the college. Following the declaration of cut-off marks, shortlisted candidates will also have to appear for online interviews before the final list is declared.

Admissions to the college follows a separate procedure and applicants have to register on the Delhi University portal and then complete the application form for the college. A separate cut-off list will be released by the college, on which a weightage of 85% is given. The remaining 15% will be based on the online interviews held.

According to the prospectus released by the St. Ste-



phen's College, trials for admissions under the sports category will not be held this year, due to the pandemic. "Applicants should note that the marks awarded for certificates, academic performance and interviews will be proportioned at 45%, 40% and 15% respectively," it read.

### Last 3 year documents

The college specified that certificates from the last three years - May 1, 2018 to April 30, 2021 - will be considered for the admissions. No changes can be made after paying fees and completing six segments

of the college admission form.

Students are required to include at least one language in the best four subjects (BFS), the college said. "You are free to choose any language you have studied in Class XII. You can also choose more than one language in the best four subjects. In case you apply for B.Sc (Hon) Mathematics, ensure that you include Mathematics among the subjects that you have selected to calculate the BFS, in addition to at least one language, while selecting checkboxes under BFS [for Maths Hons]," the college specified.

After completing the application process and paying the registration fees on the DU portal, applicants are required to visit the college admission portal with the university registration number. After receiving a verification mail, students can complete the college application form.

## DU signs MoU with University of Ladakh

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi University (DU) on Thursday signed an MoU with the University of Ladakh for a period of five years with the aim of a collaborating between the two varieties in terms of exchange programmes, sports and cultural activities and sharing of library resources and other resources.

The MoU was signed by DU Vice-Chancellor P.C. Joshi and C. Phunsog, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ladakh, with other senior officials present as well.

## DU to resume classes, practicals for science students from Aug. 16

Teachers and staff told to be present at workplaces

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

In a notification issued on Thursday, the Delhi University (DU) said that due to the decline in the number of COVID-19 cases, classes and practical work, in respect of postgraduate and undergraduate programmes for students in science courses will be conducted in the physical mode from August 16.

The notification also said that all teaching and non-teaching staff were required to be present at their respective workplaces with immediate effect.

### Following protocol

"Taking a note of the decline in the number of COVID-19 cases, it has been decided that classes and practical or project work, in respect of PG and UG programmes, students in science courses in the university and its colleges

shall be conducted in physical mode with effect from August 16, observing necessary protocols to prevent the spread of COVID-19," the notification read.

The notification added: "The online teaching and learning activities shall continue for all other academic programmes as per the notified academic calendar...it is notified that all colleges, centres, departments shall be fully functional and therefore all teaching and non-teaching staff shall attend the duties at their workplace with immediate effect."

Stating that heads of colleges and departments were required to ensure COVID-19 appropriate behaviour, the notification said, "The principals of colleges and provosts of hostels shall ensure strict adherence to all the guidelines while providing accommodation for eligible out-

station students."

Manoj Sinha, Principal of Aryabhata College said, "The university has issued broader guidelines and framework and the colleges can take a call accordingly. Institutions have to act responsibly as we have to be careful of the third wave. But graded opening of institutions is not a problem. The implementation is up to us. We can choose to start with the final year students and call small batches of students on different days for their practical work."

Abha Dev Habib, treasurer of DUTA, however said, "Can a notice ask classes for any stream to be held in physical mode? It is easy to write that all protocols should be followed but how do you ensure that they are followed? Can the university expect students to return to Delhi and find accommodation in 10 days?"

## Youth stabbed to death over friendship

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A 23-year-old youth was stabbed to death allegedly over his friendship with a girl in outer Delhi's Mangolpuri on Wednesday night. Police have registered a case and begun probe.

DCP (Outer) Parvinder Singh said that the victim has been identified as Saif, a resident of Mangolpuri. He used to work at a salon in Paschim Vihar.

Police said that a PCR call was received around 9.30 p.m. regarding the stabbing of a youth. When the police reached the spot, they were informed that the victim has been taken to the hospital where he has been declared brought dead.

During investigation, police were informed that Saif was roaming around with two of his friends in a park when the accused, identified as Rizwan alias Kallan and Asad alias Billa, called him to settle an old dispute the victim had with Asad. Both the accused then quarrelled with the victim and stabbed him in the stomach after which they fled.

## Civil defence worker arrested for extortion

He received money in his Paytm account

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A Delhi Civil Defence (DCD) employee was arrested for allegedly extorting money from people in east Delhi's Ghazipur area, police said on Thursday.

Shyam Sunder, a resident of Mandawali, joined the DCD in March this year. He was currently deployed with a team of Delhi government officials for issuing challans to violators of COVID-19 norms, they said.

Police said ₹2,000 is the fine amount for not wearing mask. But the accused asked the victims to pay ₹1,000 for not issuing challans.

DCP (East) Priyanka Kashyap said the DCD staff was involved in extortion from violators of COVID norms and was arrested on Tuesday.

"He used to receive money in his personal Paytm account from those violating COVID norms. The mobile used to receive such payments has also been recovered," the DCP said.

According to the police, the matter came to light when Ravinder Pandey, a resident of Faridabad, said that he was travelling with his family in a car from his village in Gorakhpur to Faridabad via Ghazipur on August 2. He was stopped by Shyam Sunder who first threatened him that he would issue a challan of ₹10,000 for not wearing mask as there were five members in his family but later asked for ₹1,000 in his Paytm account. Police said Pandey then transferred ₹1,000 via Paytm app and then made a PCR call

## HC seeks Centre's response on petition on manual scavenging

Plea seeks strict compliance with law to prevent loss of lives

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Thursday sought response of the Centre on an application seeking to ensure strict compliance with the 2013 law on manual scavengers to prevent loss of lives due to manual cleaning of sewers and septic tanks.

A Bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice Jyoti Singh allowed lawyer and social activist Amit Sahni's application for making the Centre as a party to his petition.

"We are allowing this application. We are joining the Union of India as party respondent. Notice upon the newly joined party," the High Court said and listed the case for hearing on September 17.

In his fresh application, Mr. Sahni referred to the statement made by Minister of State (MoS) for Social Justice and Empowerment, Ramdas Athawale, in the Rajya Sabha on July 27, 2020



that "no such deaths have been reported due to manual scavenging" in the last five years.

Mr. Athawale made the statement in a written response to a question asked in the Rajya Sabha by Mallikarjun Kharge and L. Hanumanthaiah on manual scavenging, the deaths due to it in the last five years and rehabilitation of manual scavengers.

Mr. Sahni claimed that the answer given by the MoS was "not only false and misleading but also shows utter insensitivity and apathy towards the departed souls of the manual scavengers, their

## Pink Line segment to start service today

With Majlis Park-Shiv Vihar stretch opening, the entire line will become functional

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Metro's "missing link" on the Majlis Park-Shiv Vihar Pink Line corridor is set to begin passenger operations from Friday. Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri will inaugurate it through videoconferencing.

The inauguration comes at a time when the Delhi Metro is running at a reduced carrying capacity due to restrictions imposed as a result of the pandemic.

With the opening of this stretch between Mayur Vihar Pocket 1 and Trilokpur Sanjay Lake, the entire 59 kilometre Pink Line will become operational.

### CM's appeal

The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) on Thursday yet again appealed to the commuters to travel during peak hours only when "absolutely necessary and as far as possible plan the jour-



Trial run of the Pink Line of Delhi Metro in progress in the Capital. ■ FILE PHOTO: R.V. MOORTHY

ney during off-peak hours to avail better capacity and avoid long queues."

Since the resumption of metro services on June 10, after the second wave of the pandemic, long queues have been spotted outside metro stations as a result of regulated entry to stations. Stations with low footfall have one gate open while those with a high footfall have two operational gates,

appropriate behaviour."

The metro, currently is operating with a 100% seating capacity, which can accommodate 50 passengers per coach. According to the DMRC, with 2,000 coaches in operation, the total seating capacity available is around 1 lakh while more than 2 lakh passengers come to metro stations per day during peak hours.

### Fewer gates

"In order to regulate the entry of passengers, it is necessary to restrict the number of gates. If more gates are opened, it will be difficult to regulate the number of passengers inside the trains," the DMRC said.

The Pink Line became operational in 2018, except the segment between Mayur Vihar Pocket 1 and Trilokpur Sanjay Lake due to a land-related dispute. Passenger operations on the stretch will commence at 3 p.m. on Friday, officials said.

## MLAs, MPs among 589 detained during protest

BJP running away from debate: IYC

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Indian Youth Congress organised a 'Parliament Gherao' protest to speak up against inflation, unemployment, agricultural laws and the Pegasus scandal, besides questioning why the BJP is running away from the debate on key issues but was passing the bills.

National president of Indian Youth Congress, Srinivas B.V., said that at least 89 hours of the monsoon session of Parliament have been wasted and that the general public has to bear the loss of this as the Opposition wants to discuss issues related to public concerns, but the government is obstructing it so as to avoid accountability.

### No permission

Meanwhile, Delhi Police said that it detained 589 persons including 28 women, two MPs and four MLAs during a protest car-

ried out by the IYC. The police said no permission was given to the organiser, Srinivas B.V. of the Youth Congress, to carry out any protest.

Police said the protesters started from Jantar Mantar Road and were detained near 6 Raisina.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (New Delhi) Deepak Yadav said: "A total of 589 persons including 28 women, 2 MPs and 4 MLAs were detained during the protest carried out by Indian Youth Congress. No permission to carry out the protest march was given to the organiser."

Among those detained include Rajya Sabha MP Digvijay Singh and Lok Sabha MP Ramya Haridesh along with MLAs Ganesh Dogra from Rajasthan, Shafi Prambil from Kerala, Vipin Vankhede from Madhya Pradesh and Devender Yadav from Bhilai in Chhattisgarh, according to the police.

## Argument ends in youth's murder

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A 23-year-old man was stabbed to death and his cousin sustained injuries after an argument at a birthday party in Rohini's Prem Nagar on Wednesday night. Four persons including two minors have been held in connection with the case.

DCP (Rohini) Pranav Tayal said the victims have been identified as Virender

alias Vicky and his cousin Nitin alias Kishan. The accused have been identified as Jitender, Rajesh, Vivek, Govinda, and Pintoo along with two minors. Police said that Virender didn't survive while Nitin is undergoing treatment and that Rajesh, Jitender and two minors have been held.

Police said that a PCR call was received around 9.30 p.m. regarding stab-

bing of two persons. When they reached the spot, they were informed that the injured Nitin has been taken to hospital and the team found the body of Virender in a pool of blood. He was rushed to a city hospital but was declared brought dead.

Police said that deceased Virender used to work as a plumber and Nitin assists his father at his shop of sewing machines.

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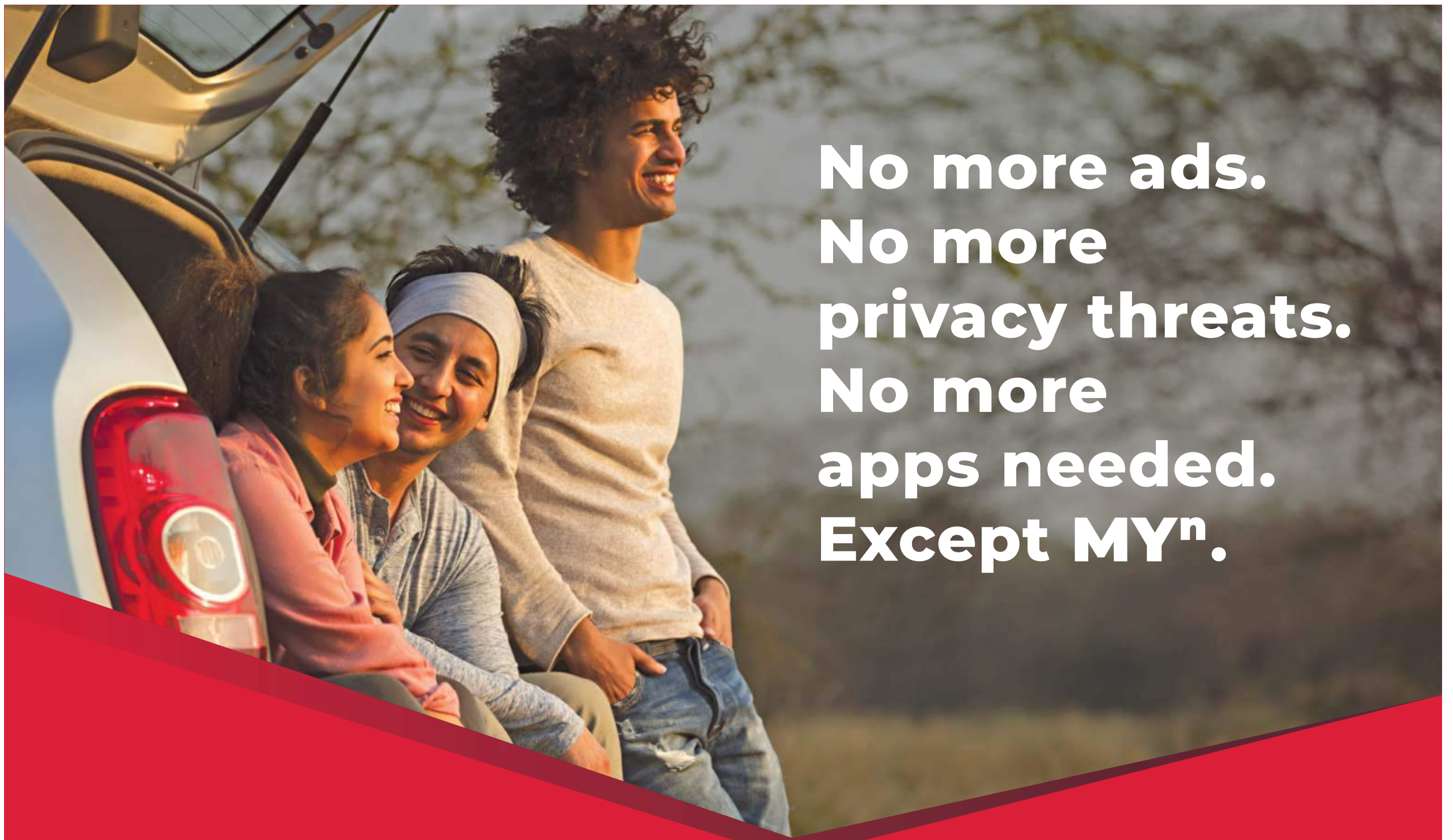
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- WAZIRPUR A-5, Near Richi Rich Banquet (Opp. Shalimar Bagh)
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क्रमांक/भण्डार/2021/389 दिनांक: 05.08.2021

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**IN BRIEF**

**Karnataka HC issues notice to Yediyurappa**  
BENGALURU  
The Karnataka High Court has issued notices to former Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa and his son B.Y. Vijayendra to appear before it on August 17 in a case alleging corruption in a housing project. ■

**HC stays case against Ganesh Kumar, Saritha**

KOCHI  
The Kerala High Court on Thursday stayed further proceedings for two months in a case registered against Pathanapuram MLA K.B. Ganesh Kumar and solar scam accused Saritha S. Nair on the charge of forging documents to defame former Kerala Chief Minister Oommen Chandy.

# ED searches premises of Baig, Zameer in IMA scam case

Nine properties of the leaders were searched

STAFF REPORTER  
BENGALURU

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) raided properties belonging to R. Roshan Baig, former MLA, and B.Z. Zameer Ahmed Khan, Congress MLA, in connection with the ₹4,000 crore IMA scam. Thousands had invested in the Ponzi scheme that went bust in June 2019.

Raids began early on Thursday on six properties linked to Mr. Baig and three premises of Mr. Khan.

An ED team from New Delhi carried out the searches. The raids were continu-



ED conducting a search at the house of MLA B.Z. Zameer Ahmed Khan in Bengaluru on Thursday. ■SUDHAKARA JAIN

ing when reports last came in. Mr. Khan's brother Shaheel Ahmed Khan was taken from the MLA's residence for questioning. However, ED sources

gesheeted in the case by the CBI.

Though Mr. Khan was questioned by multiple agencies, including the ED, for a property transaction with IMA founder Mohammed Mansoor Khan, has not been charged by any agency.

**Sensitive case**

The ED, Bengaluru, which began probe into the case in 2019, transferred it to the head office in Delhi in 2020 as it was a sensitive and high-profile case, sources said. The agency, which had largely kept quiet for nearly a year and a half, sprung into action on Thursday.

Mr. Khan was questioned by the SIT of Karnataka police, the CBI, and the ED.

## IB officers tortured ISRO scientists: CBI

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
KOCHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) informed the Kerala High Court on Thursday that Intelligence Bureau (IB) officers had physically tortured and harassed the then Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) scientist Nambi Narayanan and others during interrogation in connection with the ISRO espionage case.

In a statement opposing the bail pleas of former Gujarat Director General of Police (DGP) R.B. Sreekumar, two former police officers and a former IB officer in the espionage frame-up case, the CBI pointed out that though the custody of the accused was given to the local police, they were "physically" in the custody of the IB officers.

The CBI also pointed out that Mr. Sreekumar and Mr. Narayanan had known each other for long, since Mr. Sreekumar had been Commandant, Central Industrial Security Force, at the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, Thiruvananthapuram. They were not on good terms.

D. Shashikumar, another former ISRO scientist, deposed before the CBI on July 4, 2021, that he was taken into custody on November 22, 1994, and taken to a police club at Perookada, where he had to undergo endless physical torture.

Mr. Shashikumar had stated before the CBI that former Kerala police officer Siby Mathews and Mr. Sreekumar did not personally assault him.

However, "Jayaprakash, Punnen and some Nair, etc" who interrogated him had "physically assaulted" him.

## 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 Friday:** Heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over east Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, west Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Jharkhand, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, coastal Karnataka, Kerala and Mahe. Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning likely at isolated places over Gangetic West Bengal and Jharkhand

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	12.4	35	24.4	Kozhikode	4.0	30.0	24.4
Ahmedabad	32.8	25.7	Kurnool	0.6	35.9	25.0	
Aizawl	17.6	24.0	23.4	Lucknow	0.6	35.8	26.3
Allahabad	34.4	26.5	Madurai	38.7	26.5		
Bengaluru	28.0	20.4	Mangaluru	17.1	28.6	24.0	
Bhopal	17.6	24.0	23.4	Mumbai	4.3	31.8	25.8
Bhubaneswar	1.1	33.0	27.1	Mysuru	29.6	21.6	
Chandigarh	55	33.0	25.4	New Delhi	35.3	26.5	
Chennai	36.3	29.1	Patna	11	33.4	26.6	
Coimbatore	32.7	23.0	Port Blair	8	30.3	25.8	
Dehradun	59	29.2	22.7	Puducherry	0.6	29.8	21.9
Gangtok	23.6	18.1	Pune	0.6	29.8	21.9	
Goa	13	31.0	25.0	Raipur	7.9	31.0	25.0
Guwahati	37.0	26.2	Ranchi	32.0	23.0		
Hubbali	26.0	22.0	Shillong	0.5	26.6	17.4	
Hyderabad	31.7	23.0	Shimla	26.8	19.9		
Imphal	29.2	22.8	Srinagar	31.8	18.4		
Jaipur	33.0	25.5	Thiruvananthapuram	2	31.3	23.8	
Kochi	30.0	24.8	Tiruchi	33.8	27.5		
Kohima	28.7	17.8	Vijayawada	0.1	37.8	26.6	
Kolkata	86	33.9	26.0	Visakhapatnam	37.4	27.0	

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

CITIES	SO <sub>2</sub>	NO <sub>2</sub>	CO	PM <sub>2.5</sub>	PM <sub>10</sub>	CODE	Yesterday
Ahmedabad	12	45	16	44	107	■	
Bengaluru	11	16	25	74	69	■	
Chennai	16	14	35	53	63	■	
Delhi	9	13	21	179	142	■	
Hyderabad	2	80	10	14	30	■	
Kolkata	12	33	42	66	84	■	
Lucknow	11	13	62	56	74	■	
Mumbai	31	10	84	109	109	■	
Pune	32	53	76	68	68	■	
Visakhapatnam	16	55	40	104	100	■	

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

**SO<sub>2</sub>:** 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.

**NO<sub>2</sub>:** 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.

**PM<sub>2.5</sub> & PM<sub>10</sub>:** 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

## Radial gate of Pulichintala project in A.P. washed away

STAFF REPORTER  
VIJAYAWADA

One of the radial gates of KL Rao Sagar Pulichintala Project was washed away in the early hours of Thursday, causing floods in nearby villages.

Following continuous flood in the Krishna during the past several days, the 16th hydraulic operated radial gate of the project was washed away when officials tried to lift it around 3 a.m. This caused free flow of floodwater downstream and forced the authorities to lift other gates to reduce pressure on the dam and arrange a stop log on the failed gate.

Andhra Pradesh irrigation officials say that the water level in the Pulichintala project needs to be brought down and inflows reduced for in-



What a rush! Water gushing out after radial gate of KL Rao Sagar Pulichintala Project was washed away. ■ T. VIJAYA KUMAR

stallation of a stop log. An official said that equipment to install the stop log would be arranged by Friday morning and it would take around 18 hours to complete the work.

A flash flood alert has been issued at the Prakasam Bararage in Vijayawada and areas downstream by the authorities. The flood level is most likely to rise to the first flood warning level by 11.30 p.m. on Thursday.

ing when reports last came in. Mr. Khan's brother Shaheel Ahmed Khan was taken from the MLA's residence for questioning. However, ED sources

## Will not compromise on Mekedatu project: CM

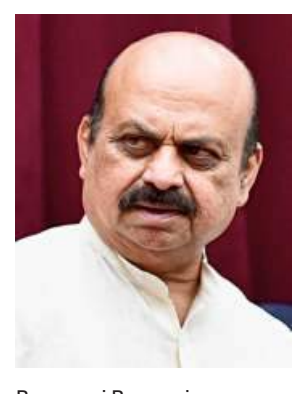
Bomma slams T.N. for its opposition

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
BENGALURU

Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Thursday reiterated that there would be no compromise on implementing the Mekedatu balancing reservoir, a drinking water project, in the Cauvery basin of the State.

"Tamil Nadu has always made a political capital of the inter-State dispute; we are not interested. They are trying to politicise everything. Entire political system in Tamil Nadu has been opposing the project," Mr. Bommai said.

On Tamil Nadu BJP president K. Annamalai, a former IPS officer who has served in Karnataka for many years, opposing the project,



Basavaraj Bommai

the Chief Minister said, "I will apprise the Central leadership. We have spoken with Union Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat regarding the project. Let anybody protest, let anybody go on dharna," the Chief Minister said.

## Sidhu moves to consolidate position

Punjab Cong. chief has been meeting party workers

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHANDIGARH

After assuming charge as Punjab Congress president, Navjot Singh Sidhu has been travelling across the State to meet party workers and leaders to galvanise support and consolidate his position within the party.

Mr. Sidhu, a detractor of Punjab Chief Minister Amrinder Singh, was appointed party president last month. Since then, he has been on the move to try and convey to the party cadre that implementing the central leadership's 18-point agenda for Punjab is his key objective ahead of the Assembly poll in the State in early 2022.

By presenting the high command's agenda at almost every meeting and interaction, party insiders feel that



Gathering support: Punjab Congress chief Navjot Singh Sidhu addressing a press conference in Patiala on Wednesday. ■PTI

the underlying message he wants to pass on among the cadre is about the strong backing of the central leadership behind him.

He has already handed over a letter to the Chief Minister regarding the five priority areas of the 18-point agenda, which includes punishing the main culprits behind the sacrilege of the Guru Granth Sahib and the police firing incidents at Kotkapura and Behbal Kalan in 2015; the immediate arrest of "big fishes" behind drug trafficking in Punjab; cancelling "faulty"

power purchase agreements; and steps towards ensuring that the Centre's three farm laws will not be implemented in Punjab at any cost.

During his interactions with party leaders and workers, Mr. Sidhu has been forcefully discussing the 18-point agenda and the five priority points.

Addressing gatherings in Moga and Faridkot on Thursday, Mr. Sidhu said he promised to give the people of State the "Punjab" of their dreams by implementing the high command's agenda.

The Opposition, however, has been quick to hit out at Mr. Sidhu. The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) have accused him of attempting to shelter the sand and liquor mafia. Former Education Minister Daljit Singh Cheema recently asked Mr. Sidhu to tell why he had whittled down the 18-point charter to five points.

**'Change of heart'**

"It was intriguing that Navjot Sidhu experienced a change of heart after Congress Ministers aligned with the sand and liquor mafia switched over to his camp and he had given up his supposed fight against these mafias," Mr Cheema alleged.

AAP MLA and Leader of the Opposition Harpal Singh Cheema alleged the heart of the Congress State president was now beating for the Congress leaders involved in illicit liquor trade and smuggling.

## Hockey star's family faces casteist slurs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
DEHRADUN

Police have arrested a man in Uttarakhand's Haridwar district for allegedly mocking and passing casteist remarks against the family of Vandana Kataria who was part of India's women hockey team which lost a semi-final match at the Tokyo Olympics.

Soon after the Indian team went down to Argentina in the semi-final, two men allegedly danced and burst firecrackers outside Kataria's house in the Roshnabad area of Haridwar in a gesture of mockery on Wednesday evening, an officer at SIDCUL police station said.

When some members of Kataria's family came out of house hearing the noise, the two men also passed casteist remarks against them, the police said.

## Attempt to displace Muslims in Moradabad area

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MORADABAD (U.P.)

The district authorities on Thursday said they will take legal action if needed against the people attempting to displace some Muslims who have bought houses in a locality here.

Some Hindu residents in the Lajpat Nagar area of the city are on protest and have put up posters declaring that their houses are on sale over some Muslims buying property in the locality.

They are demanding that the purchase of houses by

Muslims be cancelled. Officials of the civil administration and the police visited the area and urged the agitators to end their protest. But the residents were adamant, saying they cannot live together with members of the other community.

## Have been denied justice for 5 years: BJP leader

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
PATNA

A senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader in Bihar on Thursday attacked the ruling NDA government headed by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar for its repeated claim of "rule of law and good governance" in the State.

The BJP is a partner in the ruling alliance led by the JD (U) in Bihar since November 2005.

**Meeting with Minister**

Vineeta Mishra, State vice-president of the women's wing of the BJP in Bihar, met senior leader and Law Minister Pramod Kumar at the State party headquarters and demanded justice for

her dead daughter. At the meeting during the party's Sahyog Karyakaram (co-operation programme), she broke down while narrating her ordeal in following the case for the last five years. "Bihar mein hamari sarkar rahte bhi paanch saalon mein nayay nahi mila hain (despite having our government in Bihar, we were denied justice for the last five years)," she said.

The BJP leader's daughter died in 2016 at her husband's house after alleged harassment and torture by his family.

Ms. Mishra told presspersons later that she had been following the case since then.

## Assam decision a relief for 22,000 Gurkhas facing 'foreigner' test

Community body welcomes move to shelve cases in FTs

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI

Assam's decision not to let Gurkhas undergo the citizenship test through the Foreigners' Tribunals (FTs) has come as a relief for at least 22,000 members of the community in the State.

The Himanta Biswa Sarma Cabinet on Wednesday decided not to prosecute the Gurkhas under the Citizenship Act and withdraw all cases against members of the community in the FTs.

The Bharatiya Gorkha Parishangh (BGP) on Thursday welcomed the decision

and thanked the Chief Minister for solving the problem the community has been facing since 1997.

**D-voter tag**  
According to the BGP, at least 22,000 Gurkhas in the State have been marked D-voters (doubtful voters) arbitrarily in the electoral rolls since 1997, and some 2,500 cases relating to citizenship were being heard at various FTs.

About 500 cases have been disposed of since the notification for the National Register of Citizens (NRC) process began in December

2013. Some tried by the FTs were declared foreigners in ex parte (one-sided) decisions and thrown into detention camps.

"The Cabinet decision will come as a huge relief for the families of Gurkha people who have been prosecuted under the citizenship law. It will also remove the tag of illegal immigrants or foreigners from members of the community who are original inhabitants of Assam and are bona fide Indian citizens," BGP national general secretary Nanda Kirati Dewan said.

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**(SANJAY KUMAR AMBASTA)**  
**Deputy Director of Education (Sports Branch)**  
**DIP/Shabdarth/0214/21-22**





## Not always fair game

State must guard against zealous paternalism while seeking to curb activities online

Good intentions do not always make for good legislation. The Tamil Nadu government's effort to protect its youth from the temptations of online gambling by amending a colonial gaming law to ban online rummy and poker, has not survived judicial scrutiny. Its amendment to the Tamil Nadu Gaming Act, 1930, has been struck down by the Madras High Court, which found the prohibition unreasonable because it sought to bring even games predominantly of skill under the label of gambling, if there was an element of betting or even prize money or any other stake involved. The State's intention was acceptable to the extent that it sensed the danger involved in allowing addictive games. However, it erred in failing to make a distinction between games of skill and games of chance, and in seeking to treat as 'gaming' anything that involved stakes, contrary to judicial pronouncements circumscribing the term to games that are based on chance. In an audacious move that the court found completely unacceptable, the amending Act sought to "turn the statute on its head" by replacing a section that provided exemption to 'games of skill' from its purview with one that said it would apply to even games of skill if played for wager, bet, money or stake. The court rightly found that this would actually render illegal even offline games that were played for prize money. It said, "What was once the exemption or escape provision has now been given the most claustrophobic stranglehold and has the possibility of bringing about the most ridiculous and unwanted results if applied in letter and spirit."

One of the problems of political populism is that the state takes its paternalistic role too seriously. It assumes that large sections of society require guidance, lest their ideas of freedom lead them to uncharted zones where lack of restraint and self-control land them in debt and penury. Notions of individual freedom and choice tend to be forgotten. Another problem is that the moral element is predominant in such laws, often to the detriment of the reasonableness of their provisions. Some activities are associated with sin more than with commerce, and these are susceptible to the government's regulatory reach and banning instincts. The court, while understanding the law's intent, has rightly questioned the lack of proportionality in banning something that could have been regulated. It notes that excessive paternalism could descend into authoritarianism and curb an activity individuals are free to indulge in. It could not sympathise with the State's contention that online games were invariably open to manipulation and no distinction need be made between games of chance and those of skill. However, it did remember to observe that appropriate legislation regulating betting and gambling activities is still possible, but something that conforms to constitutional propriety.

## Pandemic of distrust

Those resisting vaccination mostly conform to a specific social, cultural, and political profile

President Joe Biden and the director of the CDC warned this week that the COVID-19 crisis in the U.S. was becoming a "pandemic of the unvaccinated". This underscores the growing divergence across U.S. States and communities in terms of the prevalence and intensity of the Delta variant infection, depending on the extent to which these cohorts had been vaccinated. Approximately 30% of the adult population has yet to be vaccinated, along with 58% of those in the 12-17 years age group. The country has reached this troubling impasse despite a strong start. To date, 348 million doses have been given so far. This came on the back of the firm commitment by the Biden administration to follow the science in the tackling of the pandemic, and quickly secure pledges from vaccine manufacturers – including Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson – to supply 700m doses by the end of July 2021, enough to cover 400m people. Using everything from consistent high-level messaging by the President and his team to get vaccinated, to lottery tickets and cash gifts offered by local and State governments to those willing to step and get a shot, the country has powered through to the point where 193 million Americans have received at least one dose, and at least 165 million people have received all the required doses.

Yet, it is now increasingly clear that there are two cohorts of adults resisting vaccines: the first, who are averse to getting vaccinated in all circumstances – preponderantly those who are rural, white, politically conservative, and evangelical Christian, according to surveys; and the second that are open to considering getting vaccinated but would like to wait for some time before committing to it. The second cohort is, like the first, mixed to an extent, but primarily consists of a diverse urban group, younger in age, often Democratic, and includes minorities such as African Americans, and Latino Americans. Regardless of the reasons for resisting, the statistics paint a grim picture, of 95% or higher of COVID-19 hospitalisations and deaths being of unvaccinated people; and of the highest toll affecting States with lower-than-average vaccination rates, including the likes of Florida and Texas. The Biden administration has an unenviable, multi-pronged task at hand. On the one hand, it must continue to put out facts and data as well as advocacy messaging for ever-widening vaccine reach, and this includes working alongside social media platforms to clamp down on rampant misinformation. On the other hand, it needs to avoid succumbing to any and all pressures to relax precautions, for example the disastrous – and now reversed – guidance supplied by the CDC on May 13 to the effect that people need not wear masks if they had been vaccinated.

# A guide to resolving the Assam-Mizoram issue

Historical knowledge, sensitivity and an accommodative spirit need to accompany any dialogue and negotiation



KHAM KHAN SUAN HAUSING

The violent stand-off between the Assam and Mizoram armed policemen at Vairengte in Mizoram, on July 26, about six kilometres from Lailapur, Assam which took six lives and left over 50 injured is the culmination of a long-standing border dispute.

### History and a boundary

Almost one and a half centuries ago and 17 years before the Lushai hills was annexed to British Assam in 1892, the 'inner line' boundary of the Lushai hills was 'fixed' in 1875 on the southern border of Assam's Cachar district. In line with the colonial practice of 'fixing' borders, this boundary was however not 'precise' as it was drawn largely using natural markers such as rivers and hills. In post-independent India, the Mizoram government has accepted this boundary in preference over the subsequent revisions made by the colonial government when the Inner Line Permit under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873 was extended to the Lushai hills district in 1930 and 1933.

Unlike the 1875 boundary, which involved a proxy of Suakpula, one of the Lushai chiefs, the Mizoram government perceives that the boundary instituted by these revisions sidestepped them and amounted to unilateral superimposition – driven as it were by 'administrative convenience'. These revisions are also seen to conspicuously fail to recognise the Mizo's long-standing historical rights to use the un-demarcated southern border of Cachar as their hunting ground, for *jhum* cultivation, and as sites of their re-

source extraction including rubber and timber. The enclosure of about 509 square miles of the Lushai hills under the Inner Line Reserve Forest area via the Assam Forest Regulation, 1877, is being cited as one of the glaring examples of 'encroachment' by the Assam government into the Lushai hills (now Mizoram). However, considering that borders cannot be driven by perception but by institutionalised rules and laws, Assam's government continues to refuse to accept Mizoram's standpoint.

### Assam's stand

Seen from this standpoint, the Assam government considers Mizo plantation and settlements in the Inner Line Reserve Forest areas as an 'encroachment'. Such a standpoint is oblivious to the fact that Seipua, a Lushai chief, established a village, Seidpur, on a hill nearly 10 miles from Silchar, the capital of Cachar. The Jalenga tea estate located in Tlangpui village and Paloi tea estate near Vairengte – both in Cachar – took their names after Zalenga and Palawia, two Lushai chiefs. Given that the Lushai (also known as old Kukis – Hrangkhaw, Biete, Ralte, etc.) are among the earliest settlers of Cachar, many villages in Cachar (and Karimganj) have Lushai settlements. Sporadic incidents of evictions or arrests by the Assam officials were reported in the 1970s and 2000s. A recent allegation of 'encroachment' happened in October 2020 when Assamese officials burnt down Mizo huts and other settlements in the Singla Reserve Forest which led to border clashes and a 12-day blockade of National Highway 306.

Although Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma is partially right in claiming that the dispute is about 'reserve forest' and not 'land', what is at the heart of this dispute is the contending approaches of the Assam and Mizoram governments to 'borders',



AP

namely 'state-centric' and 'people-centric' approaches.

Mr. Sarma and the Assam government represent a continuum of the colonial 'state-centric' approach to borders which gives premium to legal, juridical and administrative recognition and protection of the border. Colonial state-making and state-expansion entail a 'fixing' of borders. The discovery of oil, tea, rubber and coal around the middle of the 19th century in the 'outer limits' of Assam proper and the concomitant attempt to commercialise these commodities impel the regulation of trade and commerce between the British and their competitors. The enclosure of land in these 'outer limits' by declaring them either as 'forest reserve areas' or imposing an inner line permit raj system stem from this.

This development leverages a new land-use regime which is principally driven by efforts to augment State revenues. Forest conservation and the protection of tribal/indigenous land interests are peripheral concerns. One of the unintended consequences was the large-scale migration of labour from various parts of British India into Cachar, Hailakandi, and Karimganj. The 'encroachment' and 'enclosure' of their land and forest 'commons' reinforced the steely resolve of the tribal groups such as the Lushais to 'protect' their land. The series of raids since the mid-1840s, which culminated in the famous raid of Alexandrapore tea garden in Cachar in early January 1871, stems from this. In this raid, James Winchester, a British

tea planter, was killed, and Mary Winchester, his daughter, captured. The British launched the Lushai Expedition (1871-72) partly to secure Mary's release.

The recent overtures by Mr. Sarma to approach the Supreme Court of India, and raise a 4,000-strong commando battalion to 'protect' the 'forest reserve' areas need to be seen against this backdrop. Parading a bullet-proof armoured vehicle is intended to drive home this message. The muscular display of power also becomes fully evident in the way in which a contingent of about 200 Assam armed policemen along with Karimganj forest officials overran the central paramilitary outpost, marched and 'encroached' deep into Mizoram's border at Vairengte a day after the dispute had already flared up.

Critics squarely blamed Mr. Sarma for this misadventure and political upmanship which cost the lives of five of Assam's armed policemen and a civilian and left over 50 people injured. It remains to be seen if the immediate valorisation, ex gratia payment of ₹50 lakh and securing jobs to each family of the 'martyrs', and ₹1 lakh relief to the injured edify his image as a 'decisive' Chief Minister or expose him as a regional bully. The last image has gained traction given that Assam has a long-standing border dispute with Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Nagaland.

### Mizoram's approach

In contrast to the above, Chief Minister Zoramthanga and the Mizoram government advocate a 'people-centric' approach which seeks to give a premium to the historical and traditional rights of the local indigenous people on the one hand and to the principle of *uti possidetis juris* ('as you possess under law', including customary law) on the other hand. Mr. Zoramthanga and his predecessors have made concerted attempts to forge

a consensus around this approach. The two-member boundary committee report of 1973 and the memorandum prepared by the Joint Action Committee, non-governmental organisations and all-political parties in Mizoram in 2018, which has been submitted to the Prime Minister of India, are pointers to this.

### At the negotiating table

Given that 'borders' are contested social constructs, 'mental maps' which are given subjective meanings and interpretations, the endeavours by Mr. Sarma and Mr. Zoramthanga to 'fix' the Assam-Mizoram border and resolve the dispute need to be sensitive to the historical context in which local land owners and protectors have transformed overtime as 'encroachers' of land across the two States. Such a resolution should be sensitive to the possibility of fluid and overlapping sovereignty, where forest 'commons' are seen not simply as sites of revenue-extraction but as powerful symbols of identity and sustainable livelihood resources for the local people.

Deep historical knowledge, sensitivity and an accommodative spirit need to inform Mr. Sarma and Mr. Zoramthanga even as they sit down peacefully to enter into dialogue and negotiation under the neutral supervision of the Centre. It is about time that the Centre sets up a permanent inter-governmental forum to involve important stakeholders in order to effectively manage border and territorial conflicts. Any quick-fix solution driven by temporal electoral considerations should be avoided if we were to resuscitate and sustain interdependent Assam-Mizoram borders and beyond.

Kham Khan Suan Hausing is Professor and Head of the Department of Political Science, University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad, Telangana. The views expressed are personal

# India-Nepal flood management needs course correction

The two countries need to re-establish water cooperation as a common cause and draw inspiration from the 1950s



ATUL K. THAKUR

Nitish Kumar should be credited for bringing 'disaster management' into the popular imagination in Bihar. In his early days as Bihar Chief Minister (2005-2010), he made a few noticeable structural changes, with renewed approaches in infrastructure augmentation for dams and reservoirs, detention basins, embankments and channel improvement. Non-structural measures were also adopted in later years such as floodplain management, flood forecasting and warning, flood insurance and financial compensation.

However, despite the efforts made on the ground, people continue to suffer with perennial flooding in north Bihar (the Mithilanchal region). Already facing a humanitarian crisis of sorts following the novel coronavirus pandemic, this year's extra rainfall and floods have been a moment of reckoning. Unfortunately, this chronic issue which is making over five crore people of the north Bihar in India and Tarai in Nepal so vulnerable, does not seem to get the attention it deserves by policymakers on both sides of the border.

This year, on May 4-5, Bihar's Disaster Management Department released two documents titled: "Pre-Flood Preparedness" and "Flood Control Order 2021". The

aim was to help the local administration in terms of preparedness and having in place a relief support system. However, a solution to the issue of chronic flooding lies in revisiting the old plans and arrangements between India and Nepal. This is because flood control in Bihar is just not possible till a dedicated intergovernmental panel is formed through a bilateral mechanism between India and Nepal, that in turn can study, assess and offer solutions to this shared crisis.

### Fundamentals of flooding

Historically, Bihar has been known to be India's most flood-prone State. The Flood Management Improvement Support Centre (FMISC), Department of Water Resources, Government of Bihar estimates that 76% of the population in north Bihar faces the recurring threat of flood devastation. About 68,800 sq. km out of a total geographical area of 94,163 sq. km, or about 73.06% of the land area is flood affected. A large part of north Bihar, adjoining Nepal, is drained by a number of rivers that have their catchments in the steep and geologically nascent Himalayas.

Originating in Nepal, the high discharge and sediment load in the Kosi, Gandak, Burhi Gandak, Bagmati, Kamla Balan, Mahananda and Adhwara Group wreak havoc in the plains of Nepal's Tarai and Bihar. The FMISC says: "About 65% of the catchment area of these rivers falls in Nepal/Tibet and only 35% of the catchment area lies in Bihar. A review by Kale (1997) indicated that the plains of North Bihar have recorded the highest



PTI

number of floods during the last 30-years. In the years 1978, 1987, 1998, 2004 and 2007[,] Bihar witnessed high magnitudes of flood. The total area affected by floods has also increased during these years. [The] Flood of 2004 demonstrates the severity of the flood problem when a vast area of 23490 Sq Km was badly affected by the floods of Bagmati, Kamla & Adhwara groups of rivers causing loss of about 800 human lives, even when Ganga, the master drain was flowing low."

### Cooperation of the past

Unlike the indifference shown by Kathmandu on matters of floods and water management in recent years, the history of cooperation between India and Nepal for embankments starting in the 1950s is worth looking at. When work on the Kosi embankments started in January 1955, a group of retired Nepali soldiers came over voluntarily to join hands with Indian volunteers and start the work. Such a progressive government-citizen interface could not sustain itself and water cooperation between the two countries for a common cause

waned. Consequently, not much has happened barring the use of water resources for hydroelectric generation.

### Recasting water management

For the people of Madhubani, Darbhanga, Sitamarhi, Sheohar, Saharsa, Supaul, Purnea, Araria, Madhepura, Katihar, Samastipur, Muzaffarpur, Bettiah, Motihari and Begusarai, the flood is a part of their lives. In fact, infrastructural interventions such as building embankments and re-routing streams have disturbed the conventional pattern of slow water flow.

Earlier, without so many artificial barriers, the flow of water used to aid farming in the region. The Kosi Treaty of 1954, under which the embankments in Nepal were established and maintained, was not futuristic and did not make enough provisions for the maintenance of embankments and the rivers changing their course. The deposition of stones, sand, silt and sediment has led to river beds rising, changing course and causing unimaginable losses. Between the mid-18th and mid-20th centuries, the Kosi is said to have shifted over 100 kilometres westward, resulting in large-scale human displacements. Also, there is a need for greater sensitisation on climatic imbalances and sustainable development. Ironically, the same flood-affected regions also face the issue of drought and a sinking water table.

Notwithstanding Kathmandu's wavered approach on the matters concerning water management with India, it would not be apt to blame Nepal for releasing water

from its rivers that cause flooding on the Indian side; and on their part, for believing that India is reaping the benefits from all projects that were taken up in the past. Clearly, course correction is needed to reestablish water cooperation as a common cause and draw inspiration for joint action from the 1950s.

### For a policy refresh

As early as in 1937, the transition from the traditional method of flood control to the embankment-based British system was thought out. To control the floodwater at Barabakshetra in Nepal, a high dam was thus planned and finally built after the devastating Kosi flood in 1953. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru visited the flood-affected areas in 1953 and announced a visionary Kosi scheme for the safe resettlement of the affected people. Lalit Narayan Mishra, former Union Cabinet Minister, was the first prominent political leader from the Mithila region who unwaveringly tried improving infrastructural capabilities with the Kosi Project and other initiatives to control the flooding.

In the mainstream political and policy establishments, greater attention needs to be given to this annual calamity and its devastating effects on lives and livelihoods. India and Nepal need to be in dialogue to end the crisis of flooding every year. With a long-term strategy of water management cooperation between India and Nepal, the matter should be looked into.

Atul K. Thakur is a policy analyst and columnist

## 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.

### Mother tongue learning

The emphasis on using one's mother tongue as the primary medium of instruction in technical courses (Editorial page, "A language ladder for an education roadblock", August 5) in a linguistically and culturally diverse country such as India is ill-advised. Citing examples of homogenous and mostly monolingual countries such as South Korea, Japan and China where such programmes have been successful is missing the point. In a nation like ours,

where regions are primarily demarcated on the basis of language, this is a recipe for disastrous divisions and regressive development in the long run. Already plagued by rising bouts of regionalism, such moves will only further shackle our youth, limiting them to their homes with fewer employment opportunities. The solution is to implement bilingualism or, better yet, multilingualism across the education sector, with a special emphasis on English as a unifying factor, as well as our fellow

regional languages, thereby rewriting our colonial legacy. This will also eliminate the debate of Hindi versus other regional languages. Hence, we shall have a generation proficient in both English and their mother tongue in addition to the option of learning another regional language which will expand our human resource assets.

SALINI JOHNSON,  
Thiruvananthapuram

### Women and science

The article, "The doubted scientist and her vaccine

revolution" (OpEd page, August 5), makes it clear that Dr. Katalin Kariko's journey is not only heart-warming but also shows how she stands as a role model for scores of women in science. Women in STEM, or in the fields of Science, Technology,

Engineering and Mathematics, are significantly outnumbered by men. The discrimination against women in science continues in terms of access to education, questioning their abilities and knowledge, and there being a (gender) gap in pay and

opportunities. Highlighting Dr. Kariko's contribution would help get rid of sexist stereotypes and is a lesson for ensuring inclusiveness in the discipline.

PRAJAKTA SAWANT,  
Navi Mumbai

### CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:

A clarification: With reference to the story headlined "Governor's pardon power overrides 433A: SC" (Aug. 4, 2021) – web editions had headlined the story as "Governors can pardon prisoners, including death row ones: Supreme Court" – the correspondent says the story should have referred to them as "death row prisoners whose sentences have been commuted to life imprisonment".

The photo caption in the story headlined "Trinamool eyes Tripura to gain national footprint" (Aug. 2, 2021) erroneously referred to Manik Sarkar as Tripura Chief Minister. It should have been former Chief Minister as correctly given in the text of the story.

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# Why are government schools not the first choice?

PARLEY

Improving the infrastructure of government schools will make them more attractive

The public education system is the primary option for millions of students in India. These institutions have become more important as the pandemic takes a toll on the economy, putting fee-charging schools beyond the reach of many and forcing thousands to move to government schools. The Patna High Court recently asked for data on how many IAS and IPS officers have enrolled their wards in government schools. Anita Rampal and Uma Mahadevan discuss public education in a conversation moderated by G. Ananthkrishnan. Edited excerpts:

**About 51% students are in government schools and nearly 10% in aided schools, yet there seems to be a bias against such schools amongst wider sections of the middle class. What factors underline such a bias?**

**Anita Rampal:** People feel there are not enough teachers in these schools, or the schools may not be functioning regularly. They get carried away by the notions of a branded private school, even though it may not have good teachers. Also, private schools brand themselves [in a particular way]: they say they are English medium and parents feel that is good. But children don't learn better in a second language, they learn better if they begin to first read and write in the first language. Then, they also learn English better as a second language.

Government schools are not just of one kind. In Delhi, there are about seven-eight kinds of differently resourced government schools. Now, the ordinary government school is the poorest and is also getting the poorest children.

**Uma Mahadevan:** There are different kinds of government schools: there are Kendriya Vidyalayas (KVs), which are very well-resourced, with good infrastructure and good teachers. There are Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas, which are islands of excellence and competitively looked at for admissions. There are residential schools run by different State governments which are again well-resourced, have good infrastructure, spacious classrooms. Then, there are other model schools. We also

have municipal schools and the typical government schools run by the different Zilla Panchayats, which are not always as well resourced but often tend to get the poorer students.

We should also look at the basic safety, well-being and hygiene factors in these schools. There is no reason why they cannot have well functioning toilets, drinking water and proper compound walls. To that extent, there is some work that should be done in improving the image of these schools. We then come to pedagogy, teacher development, the level of community participation, the parent committees, etc.

**Ten years since the Right to Education law, have structural issues been addressed?**

**UM:** It's an ongoing process. Structural issues are vast. We are a very large country with different kinds of education systems in different States. And we have different kinds of issues – some areas may have a higher tribal population or different kinds of local issues that need to be addressed. But over the years, the RTE has contributed tremendously in filling our classrooms and in making education accessible to children who would otherwise have been at risk of slipping out or being pushed out of the education system and into situations like child labour or child marriage. We need to look long and hard at what we have been able to achieve and what remains to be achieved. The fact that there is a lot that remains to be done should not take away from the considerable work that has been done.

**AR:** I agree that we must look at what has been done, but also, barely 15% of the schools can be called as compliant with the RTE. That is also a reason why children are being pushed out. Section 29 of the RTE explains what kind of education every child has a right to. There is no school complying with that, including elite schools. It talks about discovery and activities which are child-centred. And on developing the potential of every child, not calling them 'slow learners', not testing them in a centralised way. We have abandoned that understanding.

**Are the victims of this**



**phenomenon predominantly in government schools?**

**AR:** Yes. And poor children who don't have tuition, parents to support them at home, or books. During COVID-19, 60-70% children had nothing. There was no attempt to go to them and see what they needed. But we say they have a 'learning loss' and poor 'learning outcomes'.

**UM:** It's true that we should be conscious of not using the language of deficit. The RTE gave us the approach of looking at the child not as a bucket to be filled but as a person who is growing and bringing to the class rich and valuable experiences and the ability to learn. The RTE also gave us the approach of formative assessments. It is not the child who is unable to learn; assessments need to help us find ways to help children learn better.

**Some people prefer English. People don't want a school which does not offer English.**

**UM:** English is seen as aspirational, which is fine, but for it to become the medium of instruction would cut away a child from what she already knows, such as concepts. Education begins as a journey from the familiar to the unfamiliar. Education in the mother tongue in the primary years helps a child build on prior knowledge and concepts.

**Do we have adequate capacity at the secondary and higher secondary levels in government schools? The net enrolment falls sharply beyond the primary level. Could this be increased with better access to quality public schooling?**

**UM:** Definitely, especially for girls. The fact that there is a drop in net

**Barely 15% of the schools can be called as compliant with the RTE.**

ANITA RAMPAL

enrolment from primary to secondary should be viewed with concern. We need to understand the obstacles: transportation, location, etc., which may be preventing teenagers, especially girls, from accessing secondary education.

**AR:** It's important that the public education system becomes a common school system. A KV has a small percentage of children coming from different socio-economic backgrounds. The notions of equity are more rooted there. Children get a chance to study with children from different socio-economic backgrounds. But in private schools, that's not the case. We were shocked that a 12-year-old child could tell us, 'why do these children have to have the same textbooks as us? You should teach them to make *gol gappas* and shoes'. This child is unquestioned by the school. When the school itself reproduces inequities, the government should not be talking of centres of 'excellence'. Delhi takes a test for the Rajkiya Pratibha Vikas Vidyalaya (schools of the Delhi School Education Directorate). Why take a test at Class 6 and only then admit children?

**A government teacher's job is secure, with an attractive salary and perks and retirement benefits, compared to teachers in private schools. Yet people hesitate in choosing a government school. What can raise the morale of these institutions?**

**UM:** While all that is true, the work of a government school teacher can

be lonely and difficult. It's highly creative work. There's a lot more that we need to do in terms of empowering school leaders, school heads, school communities, the entire teaching community, as well as the non-teaching community.

The midday meal cooks in a school also contribute to building a healthy and happy school environment as, say, the chemistry teacher. So, there's a lot that we need to do to value the work of teachers and staff, make their work visible, so that families recognise that. We also need to create better professional networks for teachers, because the best teachers continuously learn from each other.

**AR:** Teachers' professional development is a very weak area. Even students who do a four-year B.El.Ed course and start teaching feel the in-service training they later get is quite dismal. Teachers' professional development is poor. We don't find investment in terms of resources or in the planning of institutes. Now, 95% of teacher education is in private hands and most of it is substandard. Even today, almost half the regular teacher vacancies are filled by guest or ad hoc teachers.

**How can the promise of wider access to government schools be realised?**

**UM:** We should make a micro plan for every school, a larger plan for schools at the district level, and then at the State level. Then basic needs – drinking water, rainwater harvesting, school gardens, dining areas – need to be taken up before we can even start talking about levels of learning and teaching. The role of local bodies should be enhanced. Local bodies can take ownership, and school development committees can be linked with elected local bodies, so they can support the needs of schools.

**AR:** I agree, but let's not say learning can come later and this can come first. These are all important aspects of making a good school.

In terms of funding, it's not just a matter of cess, it's also priority areas. Right now, we have a priority area like a National Testing Agency. Why do we have something at the national level which decides what should happen at the local level? It should be more decentralised. Where are we finding investments

in public institutes for teacher education? We have not found it for many years.

**For government servants, and those in transferable jobs, there is a lot of paperwork, admission hassles and even the problem of compatibility of State boards. Is that a barrier due to which people don't generally go to a State government school?**

**UM:** That is something that parents keep in mind, because when people are transferred between States or to Delhi, the language, the second language, the board, the syllabus all come into the picture. Also the ability of a child to adjust to a new way of teaching and a new syllabus.

**AR:** Some years back, when a lot of curriculum renewal was happening in different States, the Ministry had asked me to look at how Kerala was doing its curriculum review, because its assessments were very different. It was creatively assessing children, which other States had not done. I documented this in some of the poorest districts in Kerala. What I found fascinating was that there were people who had earlier sent children to private schools and were now shifting them to government schools. They were not people very high up in the government hierarchy, but there were people from government offices too. They saw that their child was learning much better because they were not forced into the English medium.

**And during the pandemic we have seen thousands of students moving to government schools in many States.**

**AR:** Yes. If people who have lost livelihoods are seeking government schools, such schools should try to show their commitment to good quality education – not leave them as segregated silos for the poorest.

**The courts have asked civil servants to send their children to government schools. Is this a logical course to pursue?**

**AR:** You can't take punitive measures and say, 'why didn't you put your child there?' But trying to say, 'why can't we do it when all other countries have managed' is something that we should take up seriously.



**Anita Rampal** is Professor and former Dean, Faculty of Education, Delhi University



**Uma Mahadevan** is Principal Secretary, Panchayati Raj, Government of Karnataka



Scan the QR code to listen to the full interview online

## New opportunity for storytelling

Streaming services are liberating for filmmakers and viewers across the world

JAYENDRA PANCHAPAKESAN & MANI RATNAM

The pandemic has taught us many things, but two of them stand out for us. The first is how we need to be there for each other in times of crisis and the second is how stories form connections and unite us. It was over a year ago that the pandemic terribly affected film industries around the world, including our own. One evening, during a brainstorming session, we decided to help unite the incredible creative community of Tamil cinema to send a much-needed message of solidarity and resilience with *Navarasa*. We needed the daily wage earners in the industry, shaken by the pandemic, to feel reassured that their industry won't let them down.

Greenlighting films can take a long time and we were surprised by how quickly Netflix understood what we were trying to do with this nine-film anthology. We were inspired by the amount of work that a streaming service was ready to put in, its attention to detail, focus on quality and most importantly, how respectful it was of the creators who came on board and gave them space and trust to produce their work.

**Language agnostic**

As viewers, the language of a story stopped mattering to us a long time ago; we have become language agnostic. Many people around us, just like us, have discovered many regional Indian films, as well as cinemas from South America, Spain or Korea. On streaming, as viewers, we are more open to watching content that we know nothing about. Minimum demand for commitment and time gives us the freedom and energy to explore. If the story doesn't grab our attention, we are free to discover another story in another language. This has made us agnostic of where the stories are from in terms of cultures and geographies.

The canvas that streaming offers is probably the most important thing for storytellers. With *Navarasa*, it was clear to us that we have the complete freedom to narrate our stories, without being restricted to a two-

hour-plus format, or without breaking the film into two halves or being limited by the audience of a specific geography. Streaming enables us to tailor our stories to a film or a series and still remain honest to it. For instance, we could craft the story for each *rasa* (emotion) and do it creative justice. Without deviating from what the story needs or without designing the film for all audiences, filmmakers today can still reach the right audiences for their content, in their homes, across the world. Even stories rooted in a specific culture have found a worldwide reach with streaming. This is why streaming services are liberating for a filmmaker and for audiences across the world who may have never get to watch these incredible stories that bridge their understanding of cultures.

**Future of storytelling**

We have three observations to share. First, streaming services are pushing filmmaking towards a higher quality of storytelling and enabling us to compete with the finest filmmakers in the world in terms of quality and storytelling, which is fueling our desire to do even better work. Second, streaming services have made us aware of and opened up the possibility to collaborate with incredible actors, directors and technicians across the world. This will bring unprecedented opportunities to everyone in filmmaking. We will see more fusion in production and talent, which will lead to more exchange of ideas and craft, and make the processes of editing, writing, research, costume designing and sound mixing more collaborative. It will become easier to draw talent from everywhere because they will know that the story they are working for will be seen in their geographies too. Third, the demand for content will continue to grow and all storytelling mediums will continue to grow with it.

With the Internet shrinking the world, now it is the turn of stories and streaming to make it truly one world.

Jayendra Panchapakesan and Mani Ratnam are filmmakers

## DATA POINT

### Testing capacities

Many States in central, eastern and western India have relatively fewer COVID-19 testing labs compared to the southern and north-eastern States. States such as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Odisha and Rajasthan have less than 20 testing labs per 1 crore population. In about 78% of the 641 districts for which data were available, less than five labs are available to test samples. In about 30 districts, there are no labs. When lab availability relative to the population is considered, only 44 of the 641 districts have more than 10 labs per 1 lakh population. It is important to note that India's average number of COVID-19 tests has sharply reduced to 17.5 lakh per day in August from over 30 lakh in June. By The Hindu Data Team

#### 1. STATE-WISE

The map depicts the State-wise, COVID-19 testing labs per crore population. Among the major States, Uttarakhand, Kerala, Himachal Pradesh and Tamil Nadu have a higher share of testing labs (>30 labs per crore population). Eight major States, including Bihar, Rajasthan and U.P., have less than 15 labs

#### 2. DISTRICT-WISE

The chart shows the district-wise number of COVID-19 testing labs. About 500 districts have less than five testing facilities for RT-PCR, TrueNAT and CBNAAT testing. Among districts, Bengaluru (107), Mumbai Urban and Suburban (63), Pune (56), Rangareddy (52) and Lucknow (47) are the top five in terms of the total number of labs

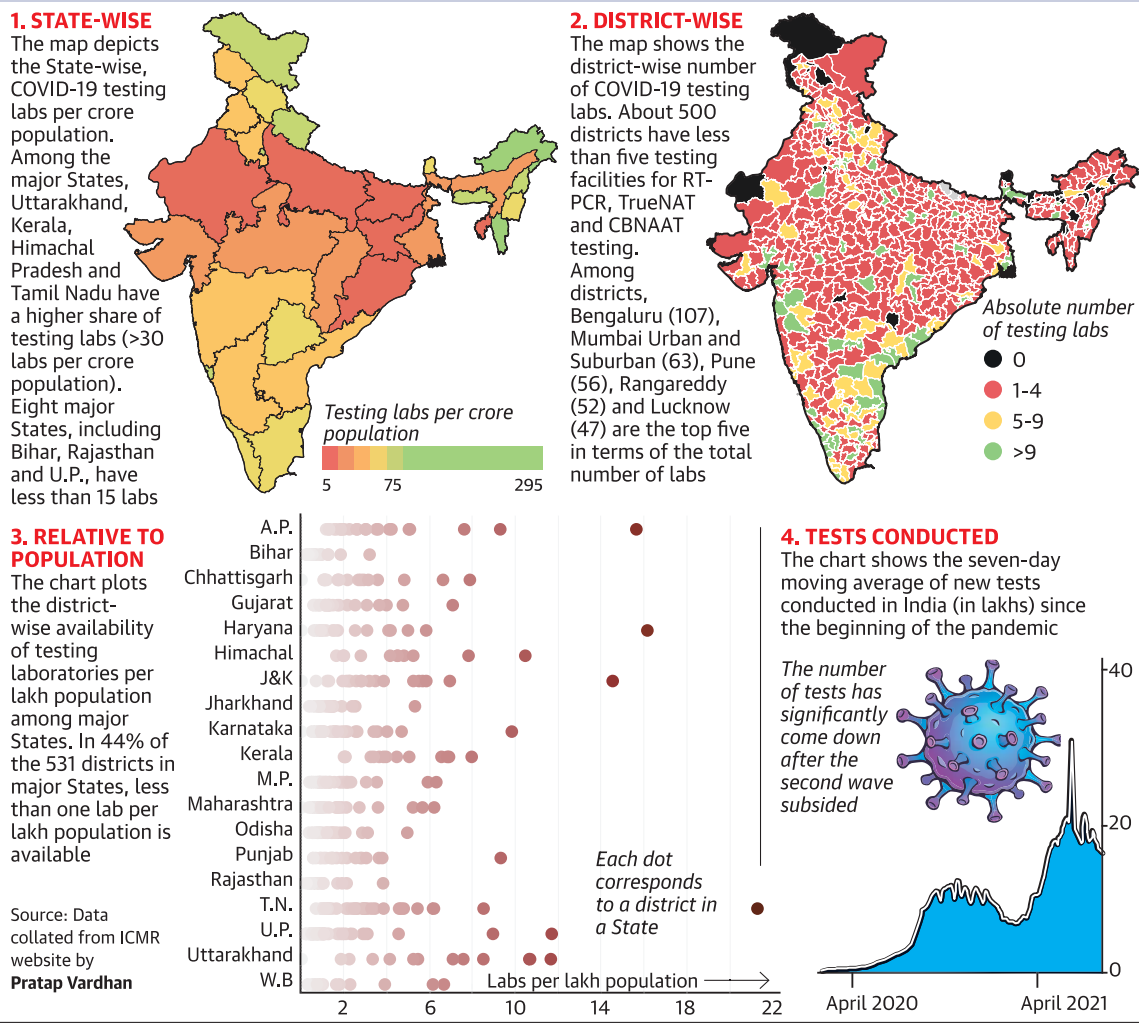
#### 3. RELATIVE TO POPULATION

The chart plots the district-wise availability of testing laboratories per lakh population among major States. In 44% of the 531 districts in major States, less than one lab per lakh population is available

■ Uttarakhand (57 labs per crore population), Kerala (50), H.P. (44) and T.N. (36) have comparatively more labs relative to the population

■ Bihar (5 labs per crore population), Rajasthan (10), U.P. (12), and Jharkhand (13) have comparatively fewer labs relative to the population

■ The labs considered for analysis only include facilities approved for RT-PCR, TrueNAT and CBNAAT testing



## The Hindu

### FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO AUGUST 6, 1971

#### Man's first walk in deep space

Astronaut Alfred Worden took man's first walk in deep space to-day, floating effortlessly like a feather nearly 320,000 km. from earth as he retrieved two film canisters from the rear of the streaking Apollo-15 spacecraft [Houston, August 5]. The canisters contain nearly two miles (3.2 km.) of high resolution film covering nearly 20 per cent of the lunar surface. A television camera relayed clear pictures to earth as Worden, bundled in a stiff pressure suit and attached to a 25-foot life-line, made three 15-foot trips to the camera bay, twice to extract the film and once to inspect equipment. He stepped through the open hatch at 15-40 G.M.T. (21-10 I.S.T.) and was back inside the cabin just 18 minutes later, the 10th man to take a walk in space, and the first to do so that far from his home planet. "It's remarkable," Worden exclaimed in the breath-taking vista of the sun, stars, sky and moon around him. Worden had an emergency pack on his back in the event of his life-line being severed during the walk. Worden's heart beat rose from 70's to about 130 a minute as he moved out – his first time outside Endeavour since launch from Cape Kennedy 10 days ago.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO AUGUST 6, 1921

#### Gandhi's reception at Aligarh

Mr. A. Mahamad Kwaja wires from Aligarh under date August 5: – Mahatma Gandhi, accompanied by Maulana Syed Subani, Maulana Mohamed Ali, Mr. Stokes and others arrived last night at Aligarh from Bombay. The journey was marked throughout by scenes of enthusiasm. At each of the principal stations seething crowds greeted the great leader with thunderous cries of "Mahatma Gandhi-ki-jai" and deluged the compartment with flowers. Maulana Mohamed Ali exhorted the people to give up the use of bidishi cloth and caps and they invariably responded with the utmost enthusiasm, casting caps, turbans and other articles in through the open windows. At Agra Cantonment, the Mahatma addressed the crowds upon Hindu-Muslim unity and urged them to take at once to the use of Khadi. The people seemed unable to leave the presence of their leaders and stood patiently in the heavy rain to hear their message. Many clambered on the outside the train and in this position accompanied it to the City.



FROM PAGE ONE

## Truth has to come out in snooping issue: SC

The CJ said that some of the petitioners have expanded the scope of their pleas beyond Pegasus to other issues, including a challenge on authorised interceptions under the Telegraph Act.

"There are a number of problems... We have to see which petitions we have to issue notice on. Some have even challenged the Telegraph Act... These are unnecessary complications," Chief Justice Ramana and Justice Kant told the lawyers.

The hearing began with a barrage of questions from the Bench. For one, the Chief Justice noted that a "majority" of the petitions were based on reports in foreign newspapers. The court asked whether there was any other "verifiable material" based on which it could order an inquiry into the Pegasus allegations.

"We are not saying the petitions are based on hearsay and we cannot say there is no material, but with your access to international materials and resources, should you not have made more efforts?" Chief Justice Ramana asked the petitioners' side.

Secondly, he said questions regarding surveillance had popped up over two years ago. "Why have you come now suddenly? What were you doing for two years?" Thirdly, the court asked why the "targets" have not taken criminal action. "If you knew your phone was hacked, why did you not file a criminal complaint?" he said.

### NSO Group's plea in U.S.

Responding to the first question about the need for "verifiable material other than foreign newspaper reports" to order an inquiry, senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Mr. Ram and senior journalist Sashi Kumar, said a California court had recorded that the Pegasus spyware was "only sold to government agencies". The U.S. court had rejected a plea by the NSO Group, the creators of the spyware, for "sovereign immunity". Mr. Ram's petition clearly mentioned that the U.S. court was dealing with a suit filed by WhatsApp against the NSO Group "for targeting the mobile phones of around 1,400 users with malware".

But Mr. Sibal said there

was anyway no dispute about Pegasus targeting Indian phone users. A statement was made by the Minister in the Lok Sabha in July, taking note of Pegasus surveillance of Indian users.

On the second question about why the petitioners have moved court in 2021 and not in 2019 when reports of unauthorised surveillance first came out, senior advocate Meenakshi Arora, for Mr. Brittas, stated that the issue was indeed raised in November 2019. "The Minister had then answered there was no unauthorised interception," Ms. Arora submitted.

Senior advocate C.U. Singh, for the Editors Guild, said the names of targets came to be known only in July 2021.

On the third question regarding why 'targets' did not go to court individually, senior advocate Shyam Divan said this was not an individual case of surveillance.

"The dimension of this surveillance is huge. This is an issue which requires the formation of an independent fact-finding body at the highest level," he submitted. Senior advocate Arvind Datar, for the five journalists, agreed that the enormity of the allegations and the number of persons targeted deserved the court to take up this case as a "class action suit".

"Pegasus is a rogue technology. It is entirely illegal. It infiltrates our lives without our knowledge through our phones... It hears, it watches, it surveys our every movement. It destroys the constitutional values of our Republic like privacy and individual dignity. Moreover, it destroys our national Internet backbone and is a threat to our national security... Please issue notice to the government. Let the government come on board and say why and how Pegasus infiltrated in India... Let the government say why, if they knew of the surveillance, they did not register a case... Why did the Government of India keep quiet?" Mr. Sibal said.

He said he was informed that accessing a mobile phone using Pegasus costs \$55,000. "The NSO Group says its technology is used for fighting terror and crime... So all these journalists are terrorists now?" he inquired.

## Centre seeks to redact retrospective tax law

Later, the tax was invoked against Cairn Energy for a corporate reorganisation done in 2006-07 and its assets were frozen by the authorities. The National Democratic Alliance (NDA), which was in the Opposition at the time, had termed this "tax terrorism" and late former Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had promised to stop the retrospective tax levy. However, there has been no move to scrap the law in the NDA's seven years in office so far - the latest rethink could have been prompted by last month's Paris court order allowing Cairn to freeze at least 20 Indian properties worth \$23 million.

The Bill's 'Statement of Objects and Reasons' reads: "It is argued that such retrospective amendments militate against the principle of tax certainty and damage India's reputation as an attractive destination." It also says, "In the past few years, major reforms have been initiated in the financial and infrastructure sector which has created a positive environment for investment in the country. However, this retrospective clarificatory amendment and consequent demand created in a few cases continues to be a sore point with potential investors."

Experts welcomed the move as it will end the

spectre of policy uncertainty for potential investors who have seen the Vodafone and Cairn cases unfold over the past decade. "This could help restore India's reputation as a fair and predictable regime apart from helping put an end to unnecessary, prolonged and expensive litigation," said Pranav Sayta, tax partner at EY.

"The ghost of the retrospective amendment on indirect transfers is now proposed to be buried with the government giving up claims on taxes due under such covered indirect transfers of Indian assets and is seeking to respect the original decision of the Supreme Court," noted Aravind Srivatsan, tax leader at Nangia Andersen.

Separate international arbitration tribunal verdicts in the Vodafone and Cairn cases have ruled against India's retrospective tax demands over the past year. While the government had earlier said it will honour the legal process, it has filed appeals against both verdicts. Cairn Energy, which was awarded \$1.2 billion by an international tribunal, has filed cases in at least ten global jurisdictions, including the U.S., the U.K., Canada and Japan, to seize India's assets in lieu of the award as the government did not abide by the tribunal's decision.

# Opposition may join farmers' stir today

Pegasus, farm laws stall Lok Sabha for third week

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

With proceedings in both Houses of Parliament remaining stalled for the third week of the monsoon session over the Pegasus snooping controversy and the farm laws, Opposition members are likely to hold a symbolic protest at Jantar Mantar on Friday to express solidarity with the protesting farmers.

Since the start of the Parliament session, a section of farmer leaders have been protesting at Jantar Mantar to demand the repeal of the three controversial farm laws.

The modalities are likely to be worked out at the routine floor coordination meeting of Opposition leaders on Friday morning but former



Dissent hour: Opposition members protesting in the Lok Sabha on Thursday. •PTI

Congress chief Rahul Gandhi is expected to join the protests.

"All of us, including Rahulji, will go to Jantar Mantar and reiterate our stand that the farm laws are 'black laws' and need to be withdrawn," a senior Congress leader from the Lok Sabha said, adding that the Pegasus snooping controversy continues to be the "number one issue".

On Thursday too, the Lok

Sabha witnessed multiple adjournments over the Pegasus snooping and the farm laws, even as the government introduced two key Bills: the Central Universities (Amendment) Bill, 2021 and the Taxation Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2021. Leader of the Congress in the Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said Bills were being passed in the House without a debate with

an average time of seven minutes spent on a Bill, and objected to supplementary list of business being circulated at the last minute.

The day's proceedings started at 11 a.m. with Speaker Om Birla congratulating the Indian hockey team for its Olympic bronze medal after 41 years, as well as the women players who won medals in individual events.

## Amid din, Rajya Sabha passes 3 Bills

Essential Defence Services Bill will de-nationalise defence manufacturing: Kharge

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Parliament on Thursday passed the Essential Defence Services Bill, 2021, that prohibits strikes by workers in manufacturing and maintenance of defence equipment, as well as the Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas Bill, 2021, which sets up a statutory body for handling air pollution in the NCR.

The two Bills, which were passed by the Lok Sabha earlier this week, were cleared by the Rajya Sabha on Thursday amid din.

The Upper House also passed the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Amendment) Bill, 2021, which amends the list of STs in Arunachal Pradesh.



Congress MP Mallikarjun Kharge speaking in the Rajya Sabha on Thursday. •PTI

During the discussion on the Essential Defence Services Bill, 2021, Leader of the Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge said new precedents were being set. He said the Bill was included in the additional agenda and was not earlier supposed to be brought in this session.

"This Bill will bring justice to tribals," Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda said.

### Stubble burning

On the commission for air quality management Bill, several MPs raised concerns over a clause that they said would penalise farmers for burning stubble.

In his response, Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav said penalty would not be imposed on farmers and that stubble burning had been decriminalised.

Elamaram Kareem of the CPI(M) moved a statutory resolution against the Bill and termed it "draconian". For his part, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said the Bill did not impede the right to "peaceful protest".

## BJP to focus on free ration for poor in U.P.

Modi criticises past governments

OMAR RASHID  
LUCKNOW

If Narendra Modi-led BJP dedicated August 5 last year - exactly a year after changing the constitutional status of Jammu and Kashmir in 2019 - to launch the construction of the Ram Mandir, this year the day marked the government's emphasis on free ration to the poor in free-bound Uttar Pradesh.

Mr. Modi on Thursday accused past governments in Uttar Pradesh of restricting the State to a "political centre" for reasons of dynasty and political selfishness and never linking it to the country's financial progress.

He also blamed the Opposition parties for "stalling" the proceedings of Parliament and "insulting" it for their "political selfishness" and said their actions indicated they were trying to score "self-goals". He juxtaposed the stalling of Parliament with the achievements of and "goals" scored by the Indian sportspersons in the Tokyo Olympics. "What the country wants, what it is achieving and how it is changing, they have no interest in this. For their selfishness, these people are hurting both the country's time and feelings," he said,



Narendra Modi

adding that the country could not be "held hostage" to this politics.

Addressing beneficiaries of the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana virtually, Mr. Modi said the date August 5 would be recorded in history for years to come. He referred to the removal of Article 370 (2019) and the "first steps" towards the construction of Ram Mandir (2020).

To emphasise Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath attended the event for free ration from the town, where he elaborated on Mr. Modi's schemes worth over ₹3,000 crore for building a "New Ayodhya." Ram Mandir was being built at a fast pace, added Mr. Modi, who also praised Mr. Adityanath as a "karma yogi."

## Akhilesh confident of 400 seats in SP's kitty

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party (SP) president Akhilesh Yadav on Thursday said given the resentment among people towards the Yogi Adityanath government, his party could even win 400 out of the 403 seats in the 2022 polls.

"Till now we spoke of 350 seats. The situation is such

that the BJP will fall short of candidates. Candidates won't ask for ticket," Mr. Yadav said, before embarking on his first major show of strength before the polls.

The former Chief Minister led a cycle rally from the SP headquarters to Janeshwar Mishra Park here on the 89th birth anniversary of the socialist leader. The move is said

to be a part of the SP's outreach towards the Brahmin community. Similar cycle yatra were held in other districts of the State.

Mr. Yadav, speaking to reporters, criticised the BJP government for the "mismanagement" of the second wave of COVID-19. He said people could even reward his party with 400 seats.



Mounting protest: Police personnel trying to disperse Youth Congress activists in New Delhi on Thursday. •PTI

## Modi suppressing reality, says Rahul

'Media not allowed to talk on key issues'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Just as Opposition members holding placards in the Lok Sabha are not shown by the Lok Sabha TV to hide the reality, Prime Minister Narendra Modi too is suppressing the reality, former Congress president Rahul Gandhi has said.

He made these remarks on Thursday at 'Sansad Gherao', a programme of the Indian Youth Congress to protest against "growing unemployment, price rise, farm laws and the Pegasus snooping controversy". Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge and Congress general secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal were among those who attended it.

Mr. Gandhi accused the

However, protests and sloganeering started the moment the Question Hour was taken up by the Speaker, with many members trooping into the Well of the House. "This is not appropriate for Parliament traditions," Mr. Birla said as the protests continued. He pointed out that crores of rupees were being spent to run Parliament and people were asking why the House was not functioning.

As the protests did not stop, he adjourned the House until noon; three more adjournments took place after this. Mr. Chowdhury tried to raise the issue of the alleged rape and murder of a nine-year-old Dalit girl but was quickly rebutted by Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs Arjun Meghwal, who wondered why Congress leader Rahul Gandhi never raised his voice against such incidents in Congress-ruled Rajasthan.

## Rajnath didn't keep his word, says Kharge

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Opposition-government tussle came to a head on Thursday when the Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, Mallikarjun Kharge, accused the government of running a propaganda that the Opposition was being inflexible despite the government's attempt to broker a peace deal.

Mr. Kharge accused Defence Minister Rajnath Singh of not delivering on his promise to resolve the deadlock. Mr. Kharge said Mr. Singh had called him and told him that he would find some "solution" to the problem after returning from a foreign trip. But a week had passed since his return and no leader had received any notice for a meeting, he said.

## 'Defence Services Bill will lapse after a year'

Right to protest stays: defence official

DINAKAR PERI  
NEW DELHI

The Essential Defence Services Bill, 2021, passed in the Rajya Sabha on Thursday does not come into effect unless it is invoked and is in place for only one year, a defence official said.

The Bill was promulgated to prevent the employee unions of the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) from going on strike against the corporatisation plan that was announced.

"There is a sunset clause introduced in Clause 1 as an amendment. It is applicable only for one year, after which it will lapse," the official said. "It does not come into effect by default. Employees have the right to peaceful protest." The Bill also did not violate the In-

ternational Labour Organisation convention. It was meant to ensure uninterrupted supply to the Services, which was "especially essential in the current situation", the official said.

### Cabinet nod

On June 16, the Cabinet approved the plan to convert 41 factories into seven government-owned corporate entities for better management. Following this, the employee unions had announced a plan to go on an indefinite strike.

The government then promulgated the Essential Defence Services Ordinance-2021, which bans all strikes by defence-civilian employees. This was condemned by five OFB unions, which called it "draconian".

## No evidence of phone hacking: BJP

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

As Parliament continued to see disruption owing to Opposition protests on the Pegasus snooping issue and the three farm laws, the BJP on Thursday claimed that there was no "prima facie" evidence to back up the allegations that certain phones had been hacked by the government.

Former Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad, at a presser at the BJP's national headquarters in New Delhi, said the government was willing to discuss all issues in the House but the Opposition had even forgone the opportunity to get clarifications from Information Technology Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw after his statement on the Pegasus issue in the Rajya Sabha. "Opposition MPs instead tore the statement," he said.

"Is there any prima facie evidence that [phone] numbers were indeed put under surveillance," he asked. Justice Arun Mishra, who retired from the Supreme Court in September 2020 and is now chairman of the National Human Rights Commission, has said a mobile number of his allegedly put under surveillance was surrendered by him in 2014, he said.

**APPEAL**

Name of patient: **Divya**, 20 years. Hospital Name: Christian Medical College. Diagnosis: Intra Conduitt Stenosis, severe tricuspid regurgitation, dilated RA/RV and normal LV/RV function. She has been advised to undergo Rastelli Conduitt revision and valve replacement at the earliest. The cost of the operation using bio-prosthetic valve would be around Rs. 4,00,000/- We request Kind Hearted Philanthropists to save her. Kindly send donation by Cheque/D.D/M.O Favouing Save Poor Lives and on the back of Cheque write A/c Divya. Our Account Details: S/B Account No. 20000913487, State Bank of India, Raja Annamalaiapuram Branch, and IFSC CODE: SBIN001855. You can donate via: [www.savepoorlives.com](https://www.savepoorlives.com)

Google Pay No. 9884607377. UPI ID: savepoorlives@okbi which is exempted under 80G of IT Act.

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# Jaishankar's Tehran trip holds key amid Afghan developments

His visit also signals easing of bilateral tensions

SUHASINI HAIDAR  
NEW DELHI

The visit of External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar to Tehran to attend the swearing-in ceremony of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi on Thursday marks a milestone in recent attempts by both sides to reset the ties that have been under strain for several reasons, including India cancelling oil imports due to U.S. sanctions, progress in Chabahar and Iranian comments on Kashmir over the past few years. They also signal that India will continue to balance its ties with Iran on one side, and Iran and the U.S., and West Asian adversaries, including Saudi Arabia and Israel, on the other.



**New reign:** Iran's new President Ebrahim Raisi gestures during his swearing-in ceremony in Tehran on Thursday. ■ AFP

## Minister will discuss bilateral issues in Iran

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar flew to Tehran on Thursday to attend the swearing-in of newly elected Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi. Mr. Jaishankar is meeting Mr. Raisi as well as other dignitaries before returning to Delhi on Friday. Apart from bilateral issues, he will discuss the growing violence in Afghanistan.

India and Iran are the two regional powers not included in the "Troika plus" meeting of U.S.-Russia-China and Pakistan, which is expected to discuss Afghanistan's future on August 11 in Doha, and have both made it clear that they only recognise the legitimacy of the Ghani government though Iran has held talks with Taliban delegations as well. Afghan President Ashraf Ghani also attended the ceremony.

day, India and Iran also share a common bond as the two regional powers were left out of the "Troika plus".

Secondly, the fact that Mr. Jaishankar is himself participating in the ceremony, without delegating it to another Minister, puts a spotlight on India's desire to build ties with Mr. Raisi in particular, who as the Chief Judge of Iran prior to this was placed on the U.S.'s list of individuals sanctioned in November 2019.

Despite campaign promises to reverse the Donald Trump policy on Iran, U.S. President Joe Biden's administration has yet to withdraw most of the additional sanctions placed in 2017-2018.

### Walk a tightrope

That Mr. Jaishankar's travels to Tehran book-ended a visit to Delhi by U.S. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken indicates that India will continue to walk its tightrope between its traditional ties with Iran and the growing strategic partnership with Washington.

"The presence of Mr. Jaishankar at the swearing-in is itself a pointer to the view held by India at the highest level. We have common interests in the region, which cannot be a subset of other relations, even though those relations are important too," said Mr. Srivastava, when asked if India's ties with the U.S. and Israel would in any way be affected by the visit. Finally, the flurry of meetings to Tehran and Mr. Zarif's engagement with Delhi indicate a desire to move on from some of the tensions in ties during the Rouhani era.

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## 'We support an Afghan-led peace process'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

India is "closely monitoring" the unfolding situation in Afghanistan, said an official of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Thursday.

Addressing the weekly press briefing, MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi laid out the position ahead of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) discussion on Afghanistan and said the relation with Afghanistan was guided by the Strategic Partnership Agreement signed in 2011.

"We are closely monitoring the evolving security situation, and we continue to call for an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire. We support an Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-controlled peace process," said Mr. Bagchi at the virtual press conference.

The comment highlighted the strategic nature of the bilateral relationship under which India had earlier sent military hardware to the government of Afghanistan. Over the last few days, several public protests took place in Herat and Kabul against the Taliban attacks, which saw widespread participation of mostly pro-government crowds. The protests took place soon after a car bomb exploded outside the house of Afghan Defence Minister Bismillah Khan Mohammadi.

"We are also strategic partners, and are guided by Strategic Partnership Agreement signed in 2011. We have been supporting the government and people of Afghanistan in realising their aspirations for a peaceful, democratic and prosperous future," said Mr. Bagchi.

# U.K. eases COVID norms for travellers from India

Reopens travel visas; moves India from 'red' to 'amber' list

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE  
NEW DELHI

The United Kingdom has moved India to the 'amber' category, reopening travel visas for Indian citizens.

The U.K. had placed India under the 'red' category in view of a surge in COVID-19 cases. This category came along with a stringent quarantine requirement, which would also be relaxed under the new set of rules.

A statement from the British High Commission informed that as part of the 'amber' list, visitor visas would be available to Indian travellers, along with "other long-term visas that have remained open".

In the new system, "travellers arriving in England could complete a 10-day quarantine at home or in the place they are staying".



**Norms eased:** Passengers displaying their tickets through a glass panel at the airport in New Delhi. ■ MOORTHY R.V.

The relaxation of the quarantine rules has come as a relief to Indian travellers as under the 'red' category rules, the mandatory quarantine had to be spent in a hotel at the personal expense of travellers.

In addition, travellers could choose to pay for a private COVID-19 test on Day 5 of the quarantine and end

their quarantine if the result turned out negative.

The 'amber' category rules, however, demand that travellers "must take a COVID-19 test in the three days before travelling to England" and book and pay for COVID-19 tests to be taken after arrival in England. They are also expected to complete a passenger locator form.

# Assam and Mizoram agree on border patrol by neutral forces

Assam govt. revokes advisory against travel to Mizoram

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI

The Assam government on Thursday revoked its advisory against travel to Mizoram after the two States agreed to let neutral forces deployed by the Union government take control of the disputed stretches of the inter-State border for maintaining peace.

Trouble between the two States since October 2020 snowballed into a major conflict on July 26, with six As-

sam policemen and a civilian gunned down allegedly by the Mizoram police and armed civilians.

The two States also decided not to send their respective police and forest forces "for patrolling, domination, enforcement or for fresh deployment to any of the areas where confrontation and conflict has taken place between the police forces of the two States during recent times". The decision was taken at a meeting between

Ministers and officials of the two States in Aizawl.

While Assam was represented by Border Protection and Development Minister Atul Bora, Urban Development Minister Ashok Singhal and Border Protection and Development Commissioner-Secretary G.D. Tripathi, Mizoram was represented by Home Minister Lalchamliana, Rural Development Minister Lalruatkima and Home Secretary Vanlalngahsaka.

## Kishor quits as adviser to Amarinder

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Poll strategist Prashant Kishor on Thursday quit as adviser to Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh as he had decided to take a "temporary break from an active role in public life" and as he had not been able to formally assume the responsibility.

Mr. Kishor's exit is significant. He had been one of the key strategists behind Capt. Singh's victory in the 2017 Assembly election in Punjab. Moreover, the Chief Minister was looking to repeat the feat with his help.

And Mr. Kishor's move comes amid speculation that he is going to join the All-India Congress Committee (AICC) in an important position.

The AICC is expected to have a major reshuffle in the next couple of months, with former party president Rahul Gandhi assuming charge again.

## Shutdown marks day when J&K lost status

Regional parties express anguish

PEERZADA ASHIQ  
SRINAGAR

People in Jammu and Kashmir observed a shutdown on Thursday, a day which marked the second anniversary of the revocation of J&K's special constitutional status. Most markets remained closed and many regional parties expressed their anguish. However, the BJP held celebrations in Jammu and Srinagar.

While the authorities decided not to block the Internet facility, extra deployments were made across the Valley. The shutdown resulted in skeletal traffic on the roads. Residents, fearing clashes, preferred to stay indoors in most parts of the old city. However, no violence was reported from any part of the Valley.

Wearing a black band, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti led a street protest outside the party headquarters in Srinagar.

"Today is a day of mourning for J&K. When unbridled oppression is unleashed and gross injustice heaped, there is no other choice but to resist to exist," Ms. Mufti said.

National Conference president Dr. Farooq Abdullah, who addressed party leaders in Srinagar, said the unilateral, unconstitutional and undemocratic decisions were unacceptable to the party.

Hurriyat chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, who remains under house arrest since August 5, 2019, said the government's August 5 move had "only complicated the Kashmir dispute".

Meanwhile, the BJP held celebrations in Srinagar and Jammu on the occasion. "The BJP has created such an atmosphere that even stone-throwers are nowhere to be seen. J&K will soon be tourism capital of India," BJP national general secretary Tarun Chugh said.

## 'Police forced shops to open in Srinagar'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
SRINAGAR

Srinagar's commercial hub Lal Chowk on Thursday witnessed a face-off between shopkeepers and the police over observing a shutdown on the second anniversary of the revocation of the J&K's special constitutional position.

Several shopkeepers at Polo View, Residency Road, Lambert Lane and Regal Chowk alleged that the police personnel in civvies cut locks with hacksaw and iron rods to lift the shutters of the closed shops. It started around 10:30 a.m. after the shopkeepers decided against opening them.

"I was forced to open [shop] against my will," said a shopkeeper.

Members of the association running these markets said several senior police officers on Wednesday warned of action in case the shopkeepers failed to open shops.

# 88% IIT Guwahati dropouts from reserved quotas

Three fourths from ST/SC communities

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

At least six out of 10 undergraduate dropouts at the top seven Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) over the past five years were from the reserved categories, according to Education Ministry data submitted in response to a question in the Rajya Sabha on Thursday.

Dalit and Adivasi activists have long argued that students from these communities face a higher level of pressure and discrimination at these institutions. However, Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan told the Rajya Sabha that the dropouts were "mainly on account of



**Worrying trend:** Dalit and Adivasi activists say that students from these communities face a higher level of pressure.

securing seat in other departments or institutions of students choice or on any other personal ground".

He was responding to a question from Kerala MP V. Sivadasan regarding undergraduate dropouts at all Centrally-funded technical institutions, the variance seen across social categories and the measures taken to address it. The Minister listed

"fee reductions, institute scholarships, priority access to national-level scholarships to aid students with poor financial backgrounds to pursue their education" among the steps taken to prevent dropouts.

An analysis of the seven IITs that stand in the top 10 of the National Institute Ranking framework shows that the disproportionality

of dropouts is starker at some institutions. IIT Guwahati holds the worst record, with 88% of its 25 dropouts hailing from the reserved categories. Almost three-fourths of all dropouts are from the SC/ST communities, although they make up less than a quarter of the students. Of the 10 students who dropped out of IIT Delhi in 2018, all were from the reserved categories, a trend that holds true for every year except 2019. More than half of all the dropouts in IIT Delhi are from the SC/ST communities and 76% of its dropouts are from the reserved categories. Top ranked IIT Madras has only had 10 dropouts over the past five years, but six of them have been SC/ST students, while another was from an Other Backward Class community.

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**RAIL WHEEL FACTORY**  
Yelahanka, BANGALORE - 560 064  
Website: [www.rwf.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.rwf.indianrailways.gov.in)

**TENDER NOTICE NO.RWF/S/P1/006/2021-22 dt 03.08.2021**

On behalf of the President of India, Principal Chief Materials Manager invites electronic Tenders from interested vendors for supply of the following items on the Indian Railways E-Portal - [www.irps.gov.in](http://www.irps.gov.in). The Tender documents and the Corrigenda to the Tenders, if any, will be available on the portal only.

Sl. No.	Tender No	Due date	Short description	Quantity
1	P1211468	16.08.2021	High Alumina Roof Set as per RWF specification and drawing	62 sets
2	P1211496	26.08.2021	Calcedine Lime as per RWF specification	5840 MT
3	P1211501	01.09.2021	Ferro Silicon as per RWF specification	783000 kgs
4	P1211502	01.09.2021	Ferro Manganese as per RWF specification	533200 kgs
5	P1211503	01.09.2021	Silico Manganese as per RWF specification	453500 kgs

Principal Chief Materials Manager

**TAMILNADU INDUSTRIAL EXPLOSIVES LTD.**  
(A Government of Tamil Nadu Enterprise)  
TEL Post, Vellore 632 059. Ph : 0416-2296661 & 2, 044-28412003  
E-mail: [tnielgmw@gmail.com](mailto:tnielgmw@gmail.com)

**MACHINERIES DISPOSAL NOTICE**

Tamilnadu Industrial Explosives Ltd., is selling used Industrial Explosives Manufacturing Machineries and accessories viz., Detonator, Detonating Fuse, Emulsion, Nitro Glycerin and Dynamite and Engineering equipment and its accessories through MSTC e-tender. Interested parties/Explosive manufacturers may visit MSTC website to participate in the tender. Assistance/clarifications, if any is needed, please contact the above phone numbers.

DIPR/669/DISPLAY/2021 **Managing Director**

**National Institute of Electronics & Information Technology, Calicut**  
NIT Campus P.O., Calicut, Kerala 673601 Phone: 0495-2287266

**M.Tech Admission - 2021**

Last date for submission of application for Embedded systems • Electronics Design Technology is extended till 12th August 2021 **GATE & NON - GATE**

For details visit : <https://www.nielit.gov.in/calicut/content/mtech-programs>  
**9446013866 / 9447423306 9446711666**

भारत सरकार / Government of India, अंतरिक्ष विभाग / Department of Space भारतीय अंतरिक्ष अनुसंधान संस्थान Indian Space Research Organisation राष्ट्रीय दूरदर्शन केंद्र National Remote Sensing Centre बालासोर, हैदराबाद / Balanagar, Hyderabad-500 037

विज्ञापन सं. एनआरएससी/आरएमटी/1/2021 दिनांक 06.08.2021  
ADVERTISEMENT NO. NRSC/RMT/1/2021 Dt. 06.08.2021

अनुबंध के आधार पर रोजगार के लिए अधिसूचना  
**NOTIFICATION FOR CONTRACT EMPLOYMENT**

एनआरएससी अनुबंध के आधार पर निम्नलिखित पदों के लिए आवेदन आमंत्रित करता है: NRSC invites applications for following posts on Contract basis:

पद कोड Post Code	पद का नाम Name of the Post	पदों की संख्या No. of Positions
01	सतत उड़कन-योग्यता प्रबंधक (सीएएम) Continuous Airworthiness Manager (CAM)	01
02	गुणवत्ता प्रबंधक (क्यूएम) Quality Manager (QM)	01

विस्तृत विज्ञापन के लिए उम्मीदवारों को सलाह दी जाती है कि वे एनआरएससी की वेबसाइट [www.nrsc.gov.in](http://www.nrsc.gov.in) देखें।  
For detailed advertisement candidates are advised to visit NRSC website: [www.nrsc.gov.in](http://www.nrsc.gov.in)  
आवेदन प्राप्त करने की अंतिम तिथि 30.08.2021  
Last Date Of Receipt Of Applications 30.08.2021

"सरकार एक ऐसा कार्यबल बनाने का प्रयास करती है जो लिंग संतुलन को दर्शाता है और महिला उम्मीदवारों को आवेदन करने के लिए प्रोत्साहित किया जाता है।"  
"Government strives to have a workforce which reflects gender balance and women candidates are encouraged to apply."

**TOURISM CORPORATION OF GUJARAT LIMITED (TCGL)**  
(A Government of Gujarat Undertaking)  
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**Tender Notice**

The tender is invited by Tourism Corporation of Gujarat (TCGL) for "Appointment of Agency for Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Implementation of Permanent Sound & Light / Multimedia show at Dhorod Dist: Kutch (Gujarat) With Operation and Maintenance of 5 years". Estimated Cost of the Project Cost of Rs.7,47,44,175/-+ GST. The interested bidders / agencies may download the tender document form the website: [www.procure.com](http://www.procure.com) from 10/08/2021 onward Last dates of submission on online: 31/08/2021 up to 3:00 P.M. Tender may also be referred on [www.gujarattourism.com](http://www.gujarattourism.com). **Managing Director of TCGL reserves the right to reject or accept any or all tenders without assigning any reason thereof**

**Managing Director**







INTERVIEW | BARBARA WOODWARD

# 'Britain will not recognise a Taliban govt. that takes power by force'

U.K.'s Permanent Representative to the UN says Britain is working alongside partners to make sure that Afghanistan returns to a pathway towards security, prosperity

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN

The U.K.'s Permanent Representative to the United Nations, **Barbara Woodward**, says Britain is not prepared to recognise a Taliban government that uses force to come to power. Ms. Woodward discussed U.K.-India cooperation at the UN, multilateralism, China, and climate action, in an interview. Edited excerpts:

On counterterrorism, the U.K. Defence Minister, Ben Wallace, said the British government will work with whoever comes to power in Kabul, providing they adhere to international norms. The Taliban have already broken these norms with its ongoing brutal campaign. Will the U.K. recognise a Taliban government that takes Kabul by force, overpowering the Afghan security forces and overthrowing the civilian government?

...We're delighted to be working so closely with India during their Security Council presidency but actually during their tenure on the Secur-

ity Council. And as you say, really strong support for counterterrorism, maritime security, and peacekeeping, which are the three big themes of the Indian presidency... On the particular question around Afghanistan, we have, of course, been following events in Afghanistan and the growing advances of the Taliban, their attacks on cities, their violence, the breaches of international humanitarian law. So there's a real concern there for the UK, for India, for other countries, particularly the neighbouring countries. And I think the answer is no, we would not be prepared to recognise a Taliban government that took power by force [and] that was com-

mitted to terrorism. So, we are working alongside partners at the moment, to try and make sure that we can return Afghanistan to a pathway towards security and prosperity [and] that we don't lose the progress of the last 20 years, particularly with respect to women's rights – so a real focus for us at the moment.

In the U.K.'s Integrative Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy, released earlier this year, there was a strong Indo-Pacific 'tilt'. Is Britain willing to join the Quad?

■ We were delighted to articulate our Indo-Pacific tilt in the Integrative Review. I think it's been captured again in the U.K. India 2030 Roadmap, India awarding Britain the status of 'Comprehensive Strategic Partnership', and the recognition overall. Of course, 41% of global GDP is going to come from the Indo-Pacific, so



No immediate plans to join [the Quad], but very happy to stay closely engaged in how things are developing there

that's what's behind our look at the Indo-Pacific tilt. We have been talking to ASEAN about 'dialogue partner' status. We have, of course, really strengthened, I think, our relationship between the U.K. and India, starting at the

very top with the Roadmap, and Prime Minister Modi and Prime Minister Johnson. So at the moment, we are very happy with the way things are going with our own Indo-Pacific tilt, but also with the architecture that is building up in the region. So, I think no immediate plans to join [the Quad], but very happy to stay closely engaged in how things are developing there.

The U.K. supports a permanent seat for India on the Security Council. But given that Security Council reform is a General Assembly issue, how specifically can the U.K. help with this, at the moment?

■ So, yes, the U.K. has been – and been proud to be – a sponsor of... supporter of India's permanent membership of the Security Council for the last 20 years. We've been very consistent in that. But you're right, Security Council reform is a challeng-

ing business and I think there are two aspects to that.

The first is the reform of how the Security Council works... And then the second question, of course, is the membership of the Security Council, on which there are competing views and various obstacles to reforming that. And yes, I know it's a General Assembly issue and there are really, sort of, two competing groups... one where India is one of a few countries which are supported for permanent membership. And then there's another group of countries which feel that there shouldn't be such a thing as permanent membership. And that needs to be sorted out, discussed and resolved in a way that doesn't lock us in to the current geopolitical scenario but, somehow, keeps us agile in the future. Because, part of the reason, as you know, that Security Council reform is such a touchstone question here at the UN, is that people feel that we were locked into a

post-1949 world and here we are in 2021.

The U.K. is hosting this year's UN climate change conference, COP26, in Glasgow. What can India and the U.K. do together specifically – but also realistically – to put the world on a better climate action path this year?

■ This is also a priority in the U.K.-India relationship. I know that Prime Minister Modi and Prime Minister Johnson have raised the level of ambition on climate change, and we are very excited by the potential that India has shown in leading on solar capacity, having quadrupled your own wind and solar capacity; and we partner with India in the Indian-led International Solar Alliance, which is really accelerating the uptake of solar. So that's the adoption of new technology, where I think India is really at the forefront. Perhaps slightly slower pro-

gress on net zero emissions.

[We] very much welcome the net zero commitment on Indian Railways by 2030, but obviously, we need to see if we can broaden that out... That can be accelerated by sharing technology by capacity building, but also by ensuring that there is enough finance raised to support this and we in the U.K. are working hard to raise the £100 billion that was committed at Paris, but more importantly to raise additional private sector funding that would allow us to move more quickly with mitigation and adaptation. And then we'll come to Glasgow. And again, very much hope that Prime Minister Modi will be able to make a commitment that will, I think, have a real impact on not only across India, but across large swathes of developing economies to help us get to net zero, and keep temperature rises below 1.5 degrees. (Full interview is available at <https://bit.ly/ukenvoy>)

## Mob attacks Hindu temple in Pakistan, damages idols

India lodges firm protest with charge d'affaires

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA LAHORE

A mob attacked a Hindu temple in a remote town in Pakistan's Punjab province, damaging idols and burning down parts of it, prompting Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed to express "grave concern" over the incident and fix the matter before court for hearing on Friday.

Police said the mob attacked the Hindu temple at Bhong city of Rahim Yar Khan district, some 590 km from Lahore, on Wednesday in reaction to an alleged desecration of a Muslim seminary by a minor Hindu boy.

The eight-year-old Hindu boy last week had allegedly urinated at a library of the seminary that caused tensions in Bhong, where Muslims and Hindus have been living peacefully for decades.

A police officer said the boy was arrested last week and booked under the blasphemy laws but subsequently released on bail for being a minor.

"The attackers were carrying sticks, stones and bricks. They smashed the deities while raising religious slogans," District Police Officer Asad Sarfraz said.

He said a part of the temple was also burnt down.

Mr. Sarfraz said the law enforcement agencies have controlled the situation and managed to disperse the mob. "Rangers have been called and deployed around the Hindu temple," he said.

India on Thursday summoned the Pakistani charge d'affaires and lodged a firm protest over the "reprehensible incident" of ransacking of a Hindu temple in Punjab province there, and said incidents of violence and persecution of minorities have continued unabated in Pakistan.

On Wednesday, ruling Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf MP Dr Ramesh Kumar Vankwani posted videos of the temple attack on Twitter, requesting law enforcement agencies to stop its "burning and vandalising".

## Iran backs move to lift sanctions, but won't bow to pressure: Raisi

'Sanctions will not cause Tehran to back down from following up on its legal rights'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE TEHRAN

Iran's new conservative President Ebrahim Raisi said Tehran backs any diplomatic move to lift U.S. sanctions but will not bow to pressure, as he took the oath of office on Thursday.

Mr. Raisi, who won a June 18 election marked by record abstention, takes office with Iran facing an economy battered by U.S. sanctions, a grinding health crisis and thorny negotiations on its nuclear programme.

"Sanctions against the nation of Iran must be lifted," Mr. Raisi told his swearing-in ceremony in Parliament. "We will support any diplomatic plans that will realise this goal."

But he stressed that "the policy of pressure and sanctions will not cause the nation of Iran to back down from following



Taking the reins: President Ebrahim Raisi kissing the Koran during the swearing-in ceremony at the Parliament in Tehran. • REUTERS

up on its legal rights".

The 60-year-old former judiciary chief officially began his four-year mandate on Tuesday, when he was inaugurated by supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

On Thursday, he was sworn in before Iran's Parliament, to which he will present his Cabinet list early next week, state

television reported.

"Today I am the servant of all the republic and more than 80 million of people," Mr. Raisi told Parliament, stressing that his administration will be one of "national consensus".

Mr. Raisi's presidency is due to consolidate power in the hands of conservatives, following their 2020 parliamentary

election victory, which was marked by the disqualification of thousands of reformist or moderate candidates.

The swearing-in ceremony was attended by around 80 foreign dignitaries, according to state TV, including Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and Iraq's President Barham Saleh.

EU nuclear deal negotiator Enrique Mora was also present.

Meanwhile, the U.S. on Thursday urged Iran to return to talks quickly on reviving the nuclear deal.

"We urge Iran to return to the negotiations soon," State Department spokesman Ned Price said. "If President Raisi is genuine in his determination to see the sanctions lifted, well that is precisely what's on the table in Vienna," he said, referring to indirect talks on reviving the 2015 nuclear accord.

## Pakistan has other 'options', PM Khan's adviser tells U.S.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ISLAMABAD

Upset over U.S. President Joe Biden's reluctance to telephonically contact Prime Minister Imran Khan, Pakistan's National Security Adviser Moeed Yusuf has said Islamabad has other "options" if the American leader continues to ignore the country's leadership.

"The President of the U.S. hasn't spoken to the Prime Minister of such an important country who the U.S. itself says is make-or-break in some cases, in some ways, in Afghanistan – we struggle to understand the signal, right?" Mr. Yusuf said in an interview with the *Financial Times*, according to the *Dawn* newspaper here.

"We've been told every time that... (the phone call) will happen, it's technical reasons or whatever. But frankly, people don't believe it," he said. "If a phone call is a concession, if a security relationship is a concession, Pakistan has options," he added.

The U.S. State Department, however, has assured Islamabad that Washington recognises Pakistan's vital role in restoring peace in Afghanistan.

## A year after Beirut blast, Lebanon is reeling under economic, political crises

Lebanon's GDP per capita fell by 40% in dollar terms during 2018-20

STANLY JOHNY

On August 4, the first anniversary of the Beirut blast, residents of the city took out a march with a mock guillotine outside its port that was ripped apart by the explosion. Elsewhere in the city, protesters clashed with police with stones and fireworks. They wanted answers and the guilty to be punished. A year after the blast, one of the biggest non-nuclear explosions in history that killed more than 200 people and injured about 7,000 others, it's still not clear who was responsible for the incident.

Authorities have said the blast occurred after a fire at a warehouse that had stored ammonium nitrate, a highly explosive material. But it's not clear who stored ammonium nitrate in a warehouse in the middle of Beirut's densely populated city centre or for what. While these questions are yet to be answered, the blast has worsened the country's economic and political crises, further deepening the public resentment.

### Political deadlock

Amid mounting public anger after the blast, Prime Minister Hassan Diab announced his resignation in August last year. But a year later, Lebanon's political elite still hasn't formed a government, and Mr. Diab is continuing in his caretaker capacity. Three leaders were appointed as Prime Minister-designates since the blast and two of them stepped down. In September, PM-designate Mustapha Adib abandoned his weeks-long efforts to form a government as he failed to reach a consensus with the major political blocs.



Demonstrators marching with a mock guillotine in Beirut on Wednesday. • AFP

In October, former Prime Minister Saad Hariri was appointed by the President as the new Prime Minister-designate. Nine months later, Mr. Hariri stepped down without a Cabinet. Mr. Hariri said he failed to reach an agreement on portfolio allocation with President Michel Aoun. Mr. Aoun later released a statement on Twitter, saying Mr. Hariri was not ready to discuss amendments to his proposals. After Mr. Hariri's failure, billionaire businessman and former Prime Minister Najib Mikati was tasked with forming the next government.

In effect, Lebanon doesn't have a fully functional government for almost a year. This is mainly because the country has a fractious political system in which key positions are allocated for different sects. According to Lebanon's post-civil war Constitution, the country's President should be a Maronite Christian, PM a Sunni and Parliament Speaker Shia. Political parties largely represent the different sects and often fail to reach common ground on governance issues.

The political deadlock continued even as Lebanon's econo-

my fell into its worst crisis in decades. The 2020 blast, which ripped through the capital's residential areas, caused damages worth \$15 billion. Even before the blast, Lebanon's economy was facing a steep contraction. It dates back to the 2019 financial crisis, which saw the country defaulting on its bonds for the first time since its independence in 1943.

### Economic free fall

According to the World Bank, Lebanon's GDP per capita fell by 40% in dollar terms between 2018 and 2020, while real GDP contracted by 20.3% in 2020, pulling the Mediterranean country into "one of the most severe global crises episodes". Already, Lebanon is witnessing scarcity of medicines and other goods. It is also facing frequent power cuts as the government doesn't have funds to import fuel. Inflation has shot up more than 110%. Unemployment rate soared to 40% late last year, according to the Bank. Crime is up and protests are the new normal. The inability of Lebanon's political class to form a government and initiate economic and political reforms seemed to have aggravated the crisis.

The UN and France organised a virtual conference of donors recently to raise funds to help Lebanon. Donors pledged about \$370 million in fresh aid, but it's not clear whether it would be of any significant help for an economy that's in free fall. The World Bank says Lebanon's situation is worse than the 2008 financial crisis in Greece or the 2001 meltdown in Argentina and that it could take 12 to 19 years for Lebanon to come out of it.

## No plan to house Indian military base on Agalega island: Mauritius

Work on two projects, agreed during PM Modi's visit, under way

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE PORT LOUIS

Mauritius has denied a report that it has allowed India to build a military base on the remote island of Agalega, with a government official telling AFP that no such agreement exists between the two nations.

Earlier this week, news broadcaster Al Jazeera reported on the construction of an airstrip and two jetties to house an Indian military base on Agalega, located about 1,000 km north of the archipelago's main island.

But on Wednesday, the Mauritian government denied any plans to allow a military installation on the Agalega is-

land, home to about 300 people.

"There is no agreement between Mauritius and India for the creation of a military base in Agalega," Ken Arian, a communications adviser to Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth, said.

Mr. Arian said that although work was under way on two projects agreed during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 2015 visit to Mauritius – a three-kilometre air strip and a jetty – they would not be used for military purposes.

### Chagos island

The report raised fears of a repeat of the 1965 decision by

Britain to separate the Chagos Islands from Mauritius and set up a joint military base with the United States on Diego Garcia, the largest of the isles.

The decades-old move has sparked protests by Chagosians, who accuse Britain of carrying out an "illegal occupation" and barring them from their homeland.

Britain insists the islands belong to London and has renewed a lease agreement with the United States to use Diego Garcia until 2036.

Diego Garcia played a strategic role during the Cold War, and then as an airbase, including during the war in Afghanistan.

## Israeli Minister threatens Iran with military action

ASSOCIATED PRESS TEL AVIV

Israel's Defence Minister warned on Thursday that his country is prepared to strike Iran, issuing the threat against the Islamic Republic after a fatal drone strike on an oil tanker at sea that his nation blamed on Tehran.

The comments by Benny Gantz come as Israel lobbies countries for action at the UN over last week's attack on oil tanker *Mercer Street* that killed two people.

**RAJASTHAN STATE SEEDS CORPORATION LIMITED**  
Pant Krishi Bhawan, 11th Floor, Jangpeth, Jaipur-302005  
CIN:U75128RJ1978952001781 Telephone No: 91-141-2227944, 2227514 e-mail: rajseed@rediffmail.com

**SHORT-TERM NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER**  
Rajasthan State Seeds Corporation Ltd. invites E-Tenders for procurement of various processing and packing materials i.e. Self Standing Laminated poly pouch (1-2 Kg capacity), DW Jute bag (40 kg. capacity), HDPEPP bag (40kg. capacity) and One side BOPP laminated, Gussetted FFP Bag (40kg capacity) vide NIT No.F3/Processing/RSS/2021-22/8991 dated 04.08.2021. Detailed tender document and NIT may be seen and downloaded from the websites [www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in](http://www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in), [www.sppp.rajasthan.gov.in](http://www.sppp.rajasthan.gov.in), [www.rajseed.org](http://www.rajseed.org), [www.agriculture.rajasthan.gov.in](http://www.agriculture.rajasthan.gov.in). The last date for downloading the tender document and uploading of duly filled tender form shall be 11.08.2021 up to 12:00 Hours. UBN: SDS2122A0009 Raj.Samwad/C/21/4450 Managing Director

**Department of Tourism, Govt. of Kerala**  
Tourism Directorate, Park View,  
Opp. to Museum, Thiruvananthapuram,  
Pin: 695 033. Ph: 0471 2560400

No. P1-6240/2021 05-08-2021

**NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER**

Name of work	Selection of consultant for preparation of Detailed project report for Development of Biodiversity Circuit in Kollam District, Kerala
Tender ID	2021_TOUR_433059_1
Last Date for submission of Bid	31.08.2021
Tender Fee	₹5,900
EMD	₹2,50,000

For further details, visit website: <https://www.etenders.kerala.gov.in> Sd/- Director

**NOTICE INVITING BID**  
**Odisha State Medical Corporation Limited (OSMCL)**  
In front of Ram Mandir, Convent Square, Unit-III, Bhubaneswar-751001  
Tel.:(0674) 2380950; Website: [www.osmcl.nic.in](http://www.osmcl.nic.in); Email: [logistics.osmcl.od@nic.in](mailto:logistics.osmcl.od@nic.in)  
Bid Ref.No.: OSMCL/2021-22/DRUGS-VETERINARY/29 Date: 06/08/2021

Online Bids through e-Tender portal (<https://tendersodisha.gov.in>) are invited from eligible bidders for supply of Veterinary Items as per the particulars mentioned below:

Sl. No.	Particulars	Date and time
1.	Date & time of release of bid	06/08/2021, 3 PM
2.	Date & time for submission of queries by E-Mail id - <a href="mailto:logistics.osmcl.od@nic.in">logistics.osmcl.od@nic.in</a>	11/08/2021, up to 5:00 PM
3.	Date & time of Online bid submission	Start Date & Time: 16/08/2021, 3 PM End Date & Time: 07/09/2021, 6.00 PM
4.	Date & time for submission of Tender Documents, Tender Document Fee of tender document	Start Date & Time: 08/09/2021, 10 AM End Date & Time: 15/09/2021, 11.00 AM
5.	Date & time of Online Technical bid Opening	15/09/2021, 11:30 AM
6.	Date of opening of Price Bid	To be informed to the qualified bidders

The bid document with all information relating to the bidding process including cost of bid document, Prequalification criteria and terms & conditions are available in the websites: [www.osmcl.nic.in](http://www.osmcl.nic.in) and <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>. The Authority reserves the right to accept / reject any part thereof or all the bids without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd/- Managing Director, OSMCL Ltd., Odisha  
CAD-806 OIPR-10112/11/0042/2122



MARKET WATCH

	05-08-2021	% CHANGE
Sensex	54,493	0.23
US Dollar	74.17	0.02
Gold	46907	-0.18
Brent oil	71.38	0.05

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	693.55	-1.15
Asian Paints	2988.40	-30.20
Axis Bank	749.30	-4.50
Bajaj Auto	3818.75	-13.25
Bajaj Finance	13994.90	-192.30
Bharti Airtel	598.70	24.30
BPLCL	453.50	-3.65
Britannia Ind	3611.15	32.85
Cipla	945.40	5.75
Coal India	145.45	0.75
Divis Lab	4923.55	-40.70
Dr Reddys Lab	4782.30	13.50
Eicher Motors	2732.15	90.35
Grasim Ind	1537.40	-17.45
HCL Tech	1061.15	21.20
HDFC	2661.70	-14.35
HDFC Bank	1484.85	19.55
HDFC Life	669.50	-5.80
Hero MotoCorp	2818.80	13.30
Hindalco	443.10	0.40
Hind Unilever	2357.70	-19.40
ICICI Bank	702.45	-12.20
IndusInd Bank	997.70	-22.85
Infosys	1653.55	4.30
Indian OilCorp	103.95	-1.35
ITC	215.25	6.65
JSW Steel	763.25	16.00
Kotak Bank	1771.75	21.80
L&T	1627.40	4.20
M&M	759.35	-6.90
Maruti Suzuki	7027.55	-75.35
Nestle India Ltd.	18208.75	151.40
NTPC	116.50	-1.35
ONGC	116.85	-0.50
PowerGrid Corp	175.20	-0.05
Reliance Ind	2134.25	30.50
SBI Life	1134.75	-2.10
State Bank	441.85	-15.10
Shree Cement	28966.65	-166.50
Sun Pharma	786.15	0.40
Tata Consumer		
Products Ltd.	768.35	9.60
Tata Motors	299.70	1.55
Tata Steel	1446.60	30.40
TCS	3283.95	10.00
Tech Mahindra	1248.20	31.70
Titan	1799.30	-0.30
UltraTech Cement	7659.00	-91.00
UPL	777.25	-7.75
Wipro	600.90	4.10

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on August 05

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	73.97	74.29
Euro	87.66	88.04
British Pound	102.96	103.44
Japanese Yen (100)	67.58	67.88
Chinese Yuan	11.45	11.50
Swiss Franc	81.64	82.04
Singapore Dollar	54.80	55.05
Canadian Dollar	59.12	59.41
Malaysian Ringgit	17.53	17.63

Source: Indian Bank

IN BRIEF



Mini Ipe takes charge as managing director at LIC

MUMBAI Mini Ipe has taken charge as managing director of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC), the insurer said in a statement. Prior to this, she was executive director in the Legal Department. A post graduate in Commerce from Andhra University, Ms. Ipe had joined LIC in 1986 as a direct recruit officer.

Reliance BP Mobility, Swiggy partner for EVs

MUMBAI Reliance BP Mobility Ltd. (RBML), which operates under the brand Jio-bp, has signed an agreement with food delivery firm Swiggy for promoting the adoption of electric two-wheelers in the food delivery segment. RBML will set up Jio-bp battery swapping stations at various locations assisted by Swiggy, and provide technical assistance and training to its delivery partners and staff.

ixigo buys bus ticketing platform AbhiBus

HYDERABAD Le Travenues Technology, the firm that operates AI-based travel app ixigo, has purchased the business and operations of Hyderabad-based bus ticketing platform AbhiBus as a going concern on a slump sale basis. The agreement includes a mix of cash and ixigo stock as consideration. AbhiBus team led by founder Sudhakar Reddy Chirra has joined the ixigo team.

Krsnaa Diagnostics may eye ₹150-cr. rural foray

MUMBAI Pune-based diagnostics firm Krsnaa Diagnostics Ltd. may utilise about ₹150 crore from the proceeds of its ₹1,213-crore initial public offering to expand rural presence, an analyst said. "About ₹150 crore will be deployed in capex in 4 or 5 PPP projects," said Parvati Rai, head of research, KRChoksey Group. "The firm will set up about 30 diagnostic centres mostly in rural areas."

# Vodafone Idea falls on Birla's departure

Billionaire stepped down as non-executive chairman adding to investor concerns over telco's troubles

REUTERS  
NEW DELHI

Vodafone Idea's shares fell to their lowest level in over a year on Thursday, a day after its billionaire non-executive chairman stepped down, fuelling concerns that the Indian wireless carrier may not survive a hefty bill it owes to the government.

The company owes about ₹500 billion over the next 10 years for use of the airwaves and in licence fees. India's Supreme Court has not allowed any recalculation of those dues.

**Slump as much as 24%** Vodafone Idea's shares fell as much as 24% before recovering to close 1.49% lower at ₹5.94 on the BSE.

In June, Kumar Mangalam Birla, the former non-executive chairman of Vodafone Idea, whose resignation was



At stake: If the telco goes under, the biggest loser will be the Centre, as a chunk of debt is owed to it, a banker said. ■AFP

accepted by the company's board on Wednesday, offered to sell his Aditya Birla Group's 27% stake in the telecom carrier to keep it afloat. Vodafone Idea was

In his June 7 letter to the government, Mr. Birla had suggested measures to save the company, including clarity on dues Vodafone Idea owed, a moratorium on airwaves payments and a floor price for tariffs.

"I want to emphasise that without immediate active support from the government on these three issues VIL's (Vodafone India Ltd.) financial situation will drive its operations to an irretrievable point of collapse," Mr. Birla wrote in his letter.

**'Expressing frustration'** The government is yet to offer any help to the company. India's Department of Telecommunications did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Vodafone Idea declined on Mr. Birla's departure, and representatives at Aditya Bir-

la Group did not respond to an e-mail from Reuters.

"This is Birla expressing his frustration at the way his pleas for help have been ignored, saying he does not want to helm the demise of a company he created," said a former executive at the company.

**'Biggest loser'**

With roughly 10,000 direct employees and loans from banks of almost ₹300 billion, Vodafone Idea's potential exit would send shock waves through India's economy.

"In case Vodafone goes under, the biggest loser in this will be the government, because a major chunk of the debt is owed to them," said a senior banker at a private bank which has lent money to Vodafone Idea. "So, the ball is now in their court," the banker added.

## Chemplast to spend ₹620 crore on expansion

Firm to raise ₹3,850 cr. via IPO, OFS

N. ANAND  
CHENNAI

City-based Chemplast Sanmar Ltd. will spend ₹620 crore on development and expansion over a period of two to three years, according to a top official.

"We hold a strong position in the South," said chairman Vijay Sankar. "Last year, we made a combined operating profit of ₹900 crore. Cash accrual at the company level is substantial. Capex will be met through internal accruals."

MD Ramkumar Shankar said there were two major projects. "The first is a brownfield project to increase the annual production capacity of specialty paste PVC resin by 50% to



Vijay Sankar

1.01 lakh tonnes at an investment of ₹256 crore," he said.

"We will also invest ₹340 crore in custom manufacturing and ₹20 crore in debt bottlenecking." The firm will raise ₹3,850 crore via an IPO and offer for sale to pare debt and boost growth.

The price band is fixed at ₹530-541 a share. The issue opens on August 10.

## SC to rule on Amazon-FRL spat today

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court will deliver on Friday its judgment in a petition filed by e-commerce major Amazon, against the proposed ₹24,713-crore merger deal between Future Retail Ltd. (FRL) and Reliance Retail.

A Bench of Justices Rohinton F. Nariman and B.R. Gavai reserved the case for judgment on July 29 after marathon virtual hearings for almost a week.

One of the questions highlighted in the case concerns the validity and enforceability of a Singapore-based Emergency Arbitrator's award, which restrained FRL from completing its Reliance Retail deal, under Indian laws.

## SF Holdings Q1 profit surges 80% to ₹5.13 cr.

'Auto still scarred by downturn'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI

Sundaram Finance Holdings Ltd. (SF Holdings) reported first quarter net profit grew 80% to ₹5.13 crore while revenue rose 13% to ₹10.50 crore. SF Holdings primarily operates as a holding company owning a portfolio of businesses engaged in various aspects of automotive manufacturing.

While performance of portfolio companies is improving, they are still below FY20 on account of the downturn in the automotive industry, SF Holdings said.

"We remain optimistic on the recovery and growth of the automotive sector in the medium term and consequently, we expect a recovery



T.T. Srinivasaraghavan

in the future results," director Harsha Viji said in a statement.

T.T. Srinivasaraghavan, chairman, said: "The downturn has given us an opportunity to further consolidate our long-term holdings in our portfolio. We have bought out foreign partners in Wheels India and Brakes India for ₹450 crore."

## 'Domestic flyer traffic rose 57% m-o-m in July'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Domestic passenger traffic grew almost 57% in July to 49 lakh passengers, compared with the previous month, according to ICRA.

The number of flight departures also shot up to 47,200 in July, registering a month-on-month growth of 49%, said ICRA.

The average daily departures in July stood at 1,500 compared with 1,100 in June as COVID-19 infections demonstrated a declining trend. However, the July departure figures were behind April figures of almost 2,000 departures.

The average number of passengers per flight during July was 104 against an average of 98 passengers per flight in June, according to ICRA.

## No e-way bills from Aug. 1 for GST return non-filers

Blocking resumes after COVID break

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

Taxpayers who have not filed GST returns for two months or quarters up to June 2021 will not be able to generate e-way bills from August 15, GST Network has said.

The move, experts said, would help increase Goods and Services Tax collections in August as pending GST returns are expected to be filed. The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) had earlier suspended the blocking of electronic way (e-way) bill generation for non-filers of GST returns, to give taxpayers compliance relief during the COVID pandemic.

In an advisory dated August 4 to taxpayers, the GSTN said, "The govern-



ment has now decided to resume the blocking of EWB (e-way bill) generation facility on the EWB portal, for all the taxpayers... from August 15". Any taxpayer who has not filed two or more returns in GSTR-3B up to June 2021, or has not filed 2 or more statements in GST CMP-08 for the quarters up to April to June 2021, will not be able to generate e-way bill after August 15.

## 'BSNL, MTNL losses, liabilities shrank in FY21'

'Govt. offered ₹69,000-crore package'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

State-owned telecom firms BSNL and MTNL have narrowed their losses and reduced liabilities in 2020-21, Parliament was informed.

In a written reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha, Minister of State for Communications Devusinh Chauhan submitted that the losses of BSNL narrowed to ₹7,441 crore in 2020-21 from ₹15,500 crore in 2019-20. MTNL reported a total loss of ₹2,554 crore for the last fiscal year compared with ₹3,811 crore in 2019-20, Mr. Chauhan added.

"The government approved a revival plan for BSNL and MTNL on October 23, 2019, which is under implementation. BSNL and MTNL have turned Ebitda



positive during 2020-21," Mr. Chauhan said.

The government had offered a combined revival package of about ₹69,000 crore to BSNL and MTNL.

The data shared by Mr. Chauhan showed total liabilities of BSNL had come down to ₹81,156 crore in 2020-21 from ₹87,618 crore in 2019-20. MTNL's total liabilities had fallen to ₹29,391 crore (₹30,242 crore).

## Australian envoy Abbott meets PM, FM

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Australian Prime Minister's special envoy to India Tony Abbott called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday and discussed the need for the two sides to re-engage on the India-Australia Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA).

The former Australian PM, who is India this week to push economic ties and initiate discussions on CECA, also met Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

"Australia views India as a long-standing, valued and trusted partner," Mr. Abbott was cited as having said at his meeting with Ms. Sitharaman, as per a finance ministry statement.

## Flipkart, founders could face \$1.35 bn fine, says ED

'Notice for investment rules violation'

REUTERS  
NEW DELHI

India's financial-crime agency has asked Walmart's Flipkart and its founders to explain why they shouldn't face a penalty of \$1.35 billion for alleged violation of foreign investment laws, three sources and an agency official told Reuters.

The Enforcement Directorate has been investigating e-commerce majors Flipkart and Amazon.com for years for allegedly bypassing foreign investment laws that strictly regulate multi-brand retail and restrict such firms to operating a marketplace for sellers.

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) official, who declined to be named, said the case concerned an investigation into allegations that Flipkart attracted foreign investment and a related party, WS Retail, then sold goods to consumers on its shopping website, which was prohibited under law.

A so-called "show cause notice" was issued in early July by the agency's office in Chennai to Flipkart, its founders Sachin Bansal and Binny Bansal as well as current investor Tiger Global, to explain why they should not face a fine of ₹100 billion (\$1.35 billion) for the lapses, said the agency official and the sources, who are all familiar with the content of the notice.

**'Complying with laws'**

A Flipkart spokesperson said the company is "in compliance with Indian laws and regulations".

"We will cooperate with the authorities as they look at this issue pertaining to the period 2009-2015 as per their notice," the spokesperson added. The agency does not make public such notices issued to parties during an investigation.



One of the sources said Flipkart and others have about 90 days to respond to the notice. WS Retail ceased operations at the end of 2015, the person added.

Tiger Global declined to comment. Binny Bansal and Sachin Bansal did not respond to requests for comment. The ED also did not respond to a request for comment.

Walmart took a majority stake in Flipkart for \$16 billion in 2018, its biggest deal ever. Sachin Bansal sold his stake to Walmart at the time, while Binny Bansal retained a small stake. Walmart did not respond to a request for comment.

Flipkart's valuation doubled to \$37.6 billion in less than three years at a \$3.6 billion funding round in July, during which SoftBank Group reinvested in the company ahead of an expected market debut.

The notice is the latest regulatory headache for the online retailer, which is already facing tougher restrictions and antitrust investigations in India, and a growing number of complaints from smaller sellers. The agency's move was welcomed on Thursday by Praveen Khandelwal, secretary general of the Confederation of All India Traders. "We urge the ED to not only impose a heavy fine but recommend the government ban both these portals, unless they follow the law in letter and spirit," said Mr. Khandelwal.

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# India clinches bronze, bridges a 41-year gap with its golden past

Comes from behind to beat Germany in a nine-goal thriller for its first podium since 1980; World champion Belgium wins gold, edging Australia in a shootout



**SHYAM VASUDEVAN**  
TOKYO  
They fought like warriors and will return home as legends, having ended India's 41-year wait for an Olympic hockey medal.

On Thursday, India beat Germany 5-4 with a lion-hearted performance to win the bronze.

This is India's 12th Olympics medal in men's hockey, the most in Games history, but the first since the gold in Moscow 1980.

The Germans made their intentions clear within 90 seconds of the start as a swift move led to a goal-line scramble and Timur Oruz slipped the ball in.

The opening 10 minutes saw action mostly in the Indian circle. Goalkeeper P.R. Sreejesh produced two stunning saves with less than 20 seconds left in the first quarter, but the ball had struck a defender's leg.



**Stirring run:** India fought spiritedly, bouncing back from the 1-7 defeat to Australia in the league phase, and recovering from a 1-3 deficit in the bronze medal match, to taste success. • AP

and won a penalty corner despite the buzzer going off. They earned two more penalty corners and the timer for the break period had to

be reset twice. India equalised in the second minute of the second quarter. Nilakanta Sharma found Simranjeet Singh, who

beat the goalkeeper with a solid strike. In the 24th minute, Nilakanta, however, lost the ball and Germany cashed in for a

2-1 lead, Niklas Wellen converting a Christopher Ruhr pass. The very next minute, Oruz dispossessed Surender

Kumar before squaring for Benedikt Furk to score Germany's third goal. India then mounted a splendid comeback. Goal-

keeper Alexander Stadler just managed to keep out a thumping Rupinder Pal Singh drag-flick in the 27th minute. But, Hardik Singh

turned the rebound into the goal.

India got a penalty corner two minutes later and Harmanpreet Singh scored his sixth goal of the tournament to make it 3-3. Rupinder found the target in the 31st minute off a penalty stroke.

The Indians went 5-3 ahead with perhaps their best field goal of the tournament. Gurjant Singh made a stirring run down the right and served a delectable assist for Simranjeet.

## Drama at the death

Germany got a lease of life in the 48th minute when Lukas Windfeder got on the score-sheet. Sreejesh then denied Germany a penalty corner in the 54th minute.

There was more drama as Germany forced another penalty corner with just 10 seconds left and the timer was off for nearly 10 seconds. Sreejesh made a last-gasp save and gave India the bronze medal.

In the gold medal match, Belgium pipped Australia 3-2 in a shootout after the regulation period had ended 1-1. This is the first Olympic gold for the Belgian men's hockey team. It had won silver at Rio 2016 and bronze at Antwerp 1920.

## The best is yet to come, says coach Reid

India's mental resilience was key in the Tokyo journey, feels the Australian

Y.B. SARANGI

Taking pride in the Indian men's team's historic bronze medal-winning feat on Thursday, chief coach Graham Reid underlined that the side had the ability to achieve greater glory.

The Australian said the togetherness of the mentally resilient and physically fit unit held it in good stead. "Last 15 months (through the pandemic) was a unique experience. Our mental resilience would have increased. I would give 9.5 out of 10 for mental resilience," said Reid during a virtual press conference.

Reid said after the semi-final loss to Belgium it was important for the team to shift its focus to the bronze medal match against Germany.

"The first hurdle was the mentality of not allowing you to feel sorry for yourself, put missing out on gold and silver behind and focus on the bronze medal match. The team did it together."

Reid spoke about a technique he followed before the match. "When we zoomed out, we pictured ourselves with a medal around our necks. We zoomed back in to see what we needed to do to



**Fighting it out:** The Indians did not let the disappointment of not making the final bog them down against Germany. • REUTERS

win. It was a fantastic performance (against Germany) apart from the first seven-eight minutes when we were a little asleep. Playing from 1-3 down, many teams would struggle mentally, but winning 5-4 was a great performance.

"We have not seen the best of this team yet."

Reid praised forward Simranjeet Singh, who was not in the original squad of 16 but played a crucial role through

the event and scored twice in India's victory over Germany. "I asked him three goals and he gave me two," Reid said.

Simranjeet, like a true team man, gave credit to the whole unit. "When I got a chance, I tried to give my best. Any of the 11 players can score. Mine was just the finishing job, the full-back started the goals," said Simranjeet.

Drag-flicker Harmanpreet

Singh spoke about the players' mental toughness. "We made a lot of sacrifices. Our focus was to remain mentally strong and it helped us... it is a proud and emotional moment. Everybody wanted to win. That's why everybody was aggressive. We thought this is the last chance. Let's do our best instead of regretting later."

"At the (Games) Village, everybody waited to congratulate us," said Harmanpreet.

## India's embrace of total hockey

Manpreet's men have matched Europeans toe-to-toe

S. THYAGARAJAN  
CHENNAI

Stumped as I am to pitch upon the appropriate epithet to describe my feelings towards the momentous victory of India over the formidable opponent Germany in the bronze-medal match at the Olympic Games in Tokyo, I am overwhelmed that, after 41 years of anxious waiting, the Indian hockey team will be decorating itself with a medal.

The dedication and determination of these boys have drawn us out of those dark days where Indian hockey struggled to cope with the swift movements of European teams.

The credit for this transformation should go to the Australian coach, Graham Reid, who has ensured that this team goes toe-to-toe with any opposition it meets, matching their pace, precision and panache and then outrunning and outmanoeuvring them in key positions of the pitch.

### Ideal illustration

A 5-4 scoreline against four-time Olympic champion Germany – a European pioneer of the total game with a hefty mix of Deutsch brass



**Back to the glory days!** Indian men have put the country on the hockey's elite map after 41 years. • GETTY IMAGES

thrown in – is the ideal illustration of the progress made by India.

Manpreet Singh and his men have defeated three European teams in Germany, Great Britain and Spain, playing such total hockey where their intensity and tempo have overawed their rivals. While moving up or dropping deep to neutralise attacks on their citadel, the Indians have moved in cohesion, invariably outnumbering their opponents.

This win is Indian hockey's revival story, it's the story of India adapting to and mastering the modern style of the game. The players and

support team have done their part and it's the duty of the country to show this sport the love it deserves.

Hockey needs money, attention and nurseries. Nurseries in every corner, the revival of the traditional tournaments and the resurrection of the sport in lands it once dominated before ceding the space to cricket.

August 5, 2021, will be etched in the history of Indian hockey and like any other fan of this sport in this nation, I am not able to keep my emotions in check. It is the right reward for all of us after all those years of heart-break.

## 'Players' fitness levels unbelievable'

A great comeback by the team, says Alloysius

V.V. SUBRAHMANYAM

Edwards Alloysius, India's goalkeeper at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics, lauded the men's team for its "fantastic display" at the Tokyo Olympics.

"The team spirit the boys showed and their levels of fitness were unbelievable. They matched the fittest teams in Tokyo," Alloysius said.

"The overall performance was exceptionally good. The loss to Belgium was not unexpected given its all-round superiority. But credit to the Indian team for holding the rivals at bay for almost three-quarters of the match," he said.

"It was a great comeback by the team after the humiliating loss to the Aussies in the league phase. It showed courage and conviction while battling it out for a medal," said the former India captain. "Coach Graham Reid was brilliant and successfully moulded the team into a champion outfit. He has repaid the faith shown in him by Hockey India," said Alloysius.



**Superman!** Sreejesh pulled off several saves, including one in the dying seconds, to make the win possible. • PTI

He was particularly happy with the performance of P.R. Sreejesh.

"Though he struggled a bit when blocking ground-level goalbound shots, Sreejesh was outstanding when making aerial saves," he said.

### Fighting spirit

"This is a great day for Indian hockey. Hats off to the boys for the remarkable fighting spirit they showed

right through the Games," said Mukesh Kumar, triple Olympian and Asian Games gold medallist.

"This Indian team is truly special and today's bronze can well be the beginning of a new era of Indian hockey," he said.

"We need to build on this huge win and have long-term plans including a professional National-level league on the lines of the IPL," he said.

### Indian men's hockey team's medals at the Olympics

■ **Gold:** 1928 (Amsterdam), 1932 (Los Angeles), 1936 (Berlin), 1948 (London), 1952 (Helsinki), 1956 (Melbourne), 1964 (Tokyo), 1980 (Moscow)

■ **Silver:** 1960 (Rome)

■ **Bronze:** 1968 (Mexico City), 1972 (Munich), 2021 (Tokyo)

## Let us build on this wonderful success

India's toughness impressive

M.M. SOMAYA

India winning an Olympic medal after 41 years is a very emotional moment.

Despite working hard, none of our teams could even reach the semifinals since 1980. So, when this team made the last four, it was a great achievement. And today's bronze makes it even more special.

Having been part of the 1980 gold-winning team, today's win has made me nostalgic. An Olympic medal is something that tells you that you have played against the best in the world.

There is no scope for trial and error in a competition like the Olympics. This victory is a vindication of the

methods adopted by the Indian team over the last few years. What also impressed me is that even after losing badly to Australia, the team did not crumble and came back strongly.

Even though the semi-final defeat to Belgium did put us back a bit, this team showed incredible physical and mental toughness to bounce back.

I also feel that this coaching team – led by Graham Reid – should be retained as it has done a wonderful job. This reminds me of Balkrishan Singh of the 1980 team. He was a very astute coach. Reid has been able to achieve similar success.

(As told to Shayan Acharya)

## You have made us proud, boys!

V. BASKARAN

This is a great, great victory!

Our midfielders did a wonderful job, and the entire team was outstanding. It was a collective effort that contributed to the historic win.

Goalkeeper P.R. Sreejesh did really well in the last few seconds during penalty corners. My mind went back to the 2016 Rio Olympics when India conceded a goal in the last few seconds against Germany (Sreejesh was in goal then too). This time, Sree-

jesh did a great job.

The Indians' fitness levels were very high. Their ball trapping and ball control was also quite impressive.

The Germans generally play physical hockey and the Indians were up for the challenge. The fact that India scored three goals off counterattacks against a team strong in defence reflected its quality and confidence.

India's penalty-corner specialist Harmanpreet Singh was outstanding, the team had probably the best goalkeeper and also the best attack.

Full credit to coach Graham Reid for shaping the players into a strong unit.

The podium finish is important for the revival of Indian hockey. To inspire the younger generation, India's Tokyo show should be promoted and all the players who made this possible should get due recognition.

I am thrilled that Indian hockey is back on the podium after a 41-year wait. Well done, boys. You have made us proud!

(As told to K. Keerthivasan by the 1980 Moscow Olympics gold medal-winning captain)



**Nation's toast:** The Indians proved they could compete with the best on the world stage. • PTI







# Late charge helps Aditi stay joint second



**Bouncing back:** A bunch of birdies at the end of the round helped Aditi return a par score. •REUTERS

Plans to continue playing aggressively & make more birdies

## TOKYO OLYMPICS

RAKESH RAO

Birdies on three of the last four holes saw Aditi Ashok retain the joint-second spot after two rounds of Olympic Games golf in Tokyo on Thursday.

Aditi shot a bogey-free five-under 66 for an aggregate of 133, a tally matched by the Danish duo of Nanna Koerstz Madsen (64) and Emily Kristine Pedersen (63).

America's Nelly Korda, who shared the second spot with Aditi at the start of the day, fired a stunning Olympic course record of 62 to open a four-stroke lead at 129.

Diksha Dagar, the second Indian in the fray, followed her first-round 76 with a 72 to share the 53rd spot at 148.

Aditi's consistent showing so far were reminders of her resolute performance in the first two rounds in the

2016 Olympics in Rio.

Making her debut in the Games, Aditi had rounds of 68 to be tied eighth at the halfway stage. However, she faded away with rounds of 79 and 76 and eventually finished 41st.

## Storm threat

Meanwhile, a potential Pacific storm that could bring torrential rain and wind to the area is threatening Saturday's scheduled final round. This could reduce the competition to 54 holes. The officials intend to continue as planned and monitor the storm before making a final decision.

Talking about the improved scores on Day Two, Aditi said, "This whole week there's going to be so many girls making birdies, especially because the weather's warm and the conditions are favourable."

"I think, whatever holes I get to play, whether it's 54 or 72, I'm not really going to

## GOLF

sit on anything, I'm just going to try and be as aggressive and make more birdies."

Asked whether a podium-finish had crossed her mind, Aditi responded, "For sure. Everyone's thinking about it and it's definitely at the back of my mind. Once on the course, I'm not really thinking much about it. I'm just trying to hit the best shot I can hit."

## Visibility in India

Responding to the visibility of the event in India, Aditi said, "Hopefully people back home are watching it a lot more. A few of my friends are staying up to watch, which is cool. The Olympics are huge."

"In a regular event people just wouldn't follow it as much, even if it was a LPGA event or a Major. So, I think the buzz has been good so far."

# Sanchez Jaime creates karate history

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE TOKYO

Spain's Sandra Sanchez Jaime won the first-ever Olympic Games karate gold medal in Tokyo on Thursday, becoming her country's oldest ever Olympian at 39 years and 323 days.

She ensured her name would be in the sport's history books by beating Japan's Kiyou Shimizu in the women's kata final.

Sanchez Jaime, 39, took the historic title with a higher athletic score than the home favourite and two-time former world champion Shimizu after the two karatekas were all square on 19.60 on the technical score. "It is crazy. I am so emotional, I am feeling so many things together. I am happy, but I want to cry," she said.

Bronze medals went to Italian Viviana Bottaro and Mo Sheung Grace Lau from Hong Kong.



Sandra Sanchez Jaime. •AFP

Later on Thursday France's Steven Da Costa beat Turkey's Eray Samdan in the men's 67kg kumite final.

Da Costa, whose twin brother, older brother and father are all in the family karate 'business', was adding this to his 2018 World championship gold.

In the last final of the night, Ivet Goranova of Bulgaria beat Ukraine's Anzhelika Terliuga to claim women's 55kg kumite gold.

# Gines Lopez scales a new high

## SPORT CLIMBING

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE TOKYO

Spain's Alberto Gines Lopez became the first Olympic sport climbing champion, winning the men's combined event, on Thursday.

The 18-year-old beat American Nathaniel Coleman into second place, with Austrian Jakob Schubert taking the bronze.

Gines Lopez finished with 28 points, edging out Coleman after completing more holds than his title rival in the closing lead event.

Gines Lopez took control by winning the speed competition and sealed gold despite finishing last of the seven finalists in the bouldering, with a fourth-place effort in the lead enough for gold.



**Spider-man!** Alberto Gines Lopez went up the wall steadily to take the gold medal. •AP

It was an impressive performance from Gines Lopez, who is usually a bouldering and lead specialist and had only qualified in sixth.

The final field was cut to seven climbers when Frenchman Bassa Mawem pulled out injured after suf-

fering an injury during qualifying. The women's combined final takes place on Friday. There will be four gold medals, rather than two, on offer at the Paris 2024 Olympics, with the speed event becoming a separate discipline.

# Sprinter defected after family advice

ASSOCIATED PRESS WARSAW

A Belarusian Olympic sprinter who feared reprisals at home after criticising her coaches at the Tokyo Games said Thursday that her grandmother advised her not to return to Belarus but she urged her fellow citizens "not to be afraid." Krystsina Tsimanouskaya left the Games and arrived in Poland on Wednesday, days after she accused team officials of trying to force her to fly back to Belarus, where an authoritarian government has relentlessly pursued its critics. She told



Krystsina Tsimanouskaya in Warsaw. •REUTERS

reporters on Thursday that the officials told her to say she was injured and had to go home early, but she refused. Meanwhile, back home,

her criticism on social media of how her team was being managed set off a massive backlash in state-run media. Her grandmother told her by phone there were reports on television that she was mentally ill and said it was best for her to not return.

At a news conference in Warsaw on Thursday, Tsimanouskaya thanked people who supported her.

She also had a message for her fellow Belarusians. "I want to tell all Belarusians not to be afraid and if they're under pressure, speak out," the runner said.

# USA a match away from fourth straight gold

France edges out Slovenia by a point to make the summit clash

## BASKETBALL

REUTERS TOKYO

Kevin Durant and Team USA trounced Australia on Thursday in the men's basketball semifinals and will play for their fourth consecutive Olympic gold medal when they take on France in the final.

The Americans overcame an early deficit and ran away with the game for a 97-78 rout, while France needed a blocked shot in the final second to edge Slovenia 90-89. The Americans, champions at the previous three Games, got off to a rocky start, shooting poorly and racking up fouls that let Australia build a 15-point lead in the second quarter.

The United States rallied in the second half, opening with 12 unanswered points. A barrage of three-pointers and dunks widened the gap to 19 points by the final buzzer. The Americans have historically been the team to beat, with 15 men's basketball gold medals since 1936.

But the team in Tokyo has proven to be vulnerable, dropping two-straight exhibition games in July and suffering its first Olympic defeat since 2004 against France earlier in the event.

But it all came together in the semifinals, Durant leading the way with 23 points. Slovenia's Luka Doncic of Dallas Mavericks had a triple double - 16 points, 18 assists and 10 rebounds - but came up short against France.



**Easily done:** Kevin Durant, centre, celebrates victory with teammates. •GETTY IMAGES

## MEDALS RACE

	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE	T
China	34	24	16	74
USA	29	35	27	91
Japan	22	10	14	46
Australia	17	5	19	41
ROC	16	22	20	58
Great Britain	16	18	17	51
Germany	9	9	16	34
France	7	11	9	27
Italy	7	10	18	35
Netherlands	7	9	10	26
<b>65. India</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>

ROC: Russian Olympic Committee

# IOC bans video sharing from Games

REUTERS TOKYO

Sharing videos from the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games on social media is not allowed, even for athletes, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) said on Thursday as it looked to protect the rights of broadcasters.

Jamaican double gold medalist sprinter Elaine Thompson-Herah was blocked briefly from Instagram on Wednesday after she had posted videos of her victorious 100 and 200 metres races to her 310,000 followers, violating broadcast rights for the Games. The IOC will receive more than \$4 billion in broadcasting rights.

# Archer out for the rest of 2021



Jofra Archer. •FILE PHOTO: AFP

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE NOTTINGHAM

England fast bowler Jofra Archer will miss both the Twenty20 World Cup and the Ashes series in Australia after the England and Wales Cricket Board announced on Thursday he had been ruled out with an elbow injury.

The ECB said in a statement that scans last week on his right elbow had revealed he had suffered a recurrence of a stress fracture. "In response to these findings, he has been ruled out for the rest of the year and will miss the current LV= Insurance Test series against India, the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2021 and the Ashes series in Australia," the ECB statement added.

# Anderson double revives England before rain mars play

Kohli dismissed for a first-ball duck as India loses four wickets for 15 runs; Rahul holds fort with a fifty

## INDIA IN ENG

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE NOTTINGHAM

The wily old James Anderson once again got his 'bunny' Virat Kohli in a mesmerising spell that undid India's solid opening stand to leave the visitors tottering at 125 for four against England on a rain-curtailed day two of the opening Test.

The 39-year-old Anderson (13.4-7-15-2) swung it in England's favour with successive precision deliveries that got Cheteshwar Pujara (4) and Virat Kohli (0) as India from 97 for no loss slumped to 112 for four in a space of less than six overs.

## Standing tall

The in-form K.L. Rahul (57 batting off 151 balls) is still standing tall amid rains alongside Rishabh Pant (7 batting) but the advantage that India got in the opening session was neutralised by Anderson's spell and the pressure also led to an unfortunate run out of Ajinkya Rahane (5).

Rahul's classy Test match batting would surely be a re-



**Vital strike:** James Anderson provides a big breakthrough by having Virat Kohli caught behind. •GETTY IMAGES

lief for the Indian team management after the talented Karnataka batsman lost his place in the longest formats due to a prolonged bad patch.

He could have also been Anderson's third victim but was dropped in the slips, his only batting glitch on the day.

The nine fours, mostly

drives, were majestic and the control over his own mind while selecting the bad balls under overcast conditions was exemplary.

**Equals Kumble's record** But Anderson did take the cake on the day the pacer with the highest number of Test matches under his belt (163rd game) equalled Anil

Kumble's record of 619 scalps. He matched Kumble's record after fooling the Indian captain once again in the corridor of uncertainty.

It was a fuller delivery that Kohli played for the inswinger but it held its line to take a healthy edge into Jos Butler's gloves. Both Kohli and Anderson would have a sense of deja vu thinking

about what happened in 2014.

A ball before, the artist was at work as he got Pujara forward with one that was shaping into him but deviated away when he pressed forward for Buttler to take a low catch. The manner of dismissal is sure to increase the cobwebs in Pujara's mind as this series is certainly going to have a bearing on his international future.

## SCOREBOARD

ENGLAND - 1ST INNINGS 183.

**INDIA - 1ST INNINGS** Rohit Sharma c Curran b Robinson 36 (107b, 6x4), K.L. Rahul (batting) 57 (148b, 9x4), Cheteshwar Pujara c Buttler b Anderson 4 (16b), Virat Kohli c Buttler b Anderson 0 (1b), Ajinkya Rahane run out 5 (5b), Rishabh Pant (batting) 7 (8b, 1x4); Extras (b-5, lb-3, nb-8): 16; Total (for four wkts. in 46.4 overs): 125.

**FALL OF WICKETS** 1-97 (Rohit, 37.3 overs), 2-104 (Pujara, 40.2), 3-104 (Kohli, 40.3), 4-112 (Rahane, 43.2).

**ENGLAND BOWLING** Anderson 13.4-7-15-2, Broad 11-1-45-0, Robinson 15-5-32-1, Curran 7-1-25-0.

# Barcelona announces Messi's departure



**The end:** Despite Messi and Barcelona reaching an agreement, a club statement said that financial and structural obstacles prevented the deal. •AFP

## LA LIGA

ASSOCIATED PRESS BARCELONA

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

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

"Despite club and player

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

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

"As a result of this situation, Messi shall not be staying on at FC Barcelona," it said.

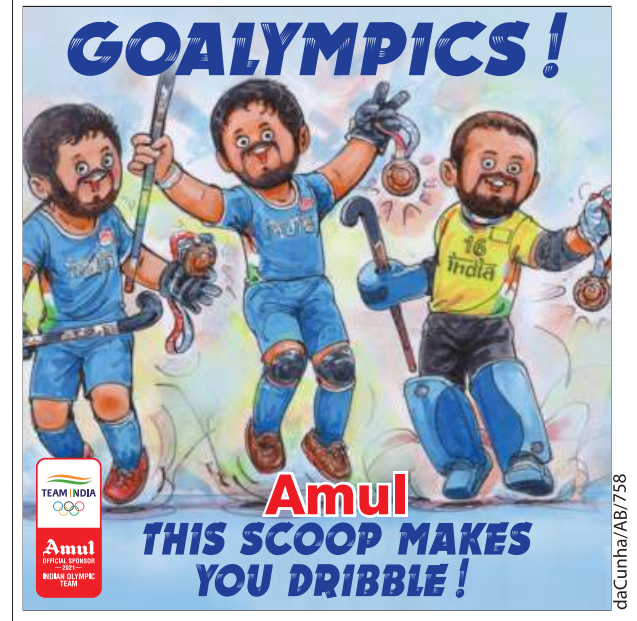
"Both parties deeply regret that the wishes of the player and the club will ultimately not be fulfilled."



Jubilation all around



**Celebration jig:** The Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar presents rapturous scenes as fans and State hockey hostel players dance in joy over the Indian team's victory in the bronze medal match at the Tokyo Olympics. ■BISWARANJAN ROUT



TV PICKS

**England vs India:** 1st Test, day 3, Sony Six & Sony Ten 3 (SD & HD), 3.30 p.m.  
**TNPL 2021:** Star Sports 2 (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m.  
**Tokyo 2020:** Sony Ten 2 & Sony Six (SD & HD), 3.30 a.m. onwards (Saturday); Sony Ten 3 (SD & HD), 4 a.m. onwards (Saturday)

Olympian 'Babu' Narayan passes away

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
THANE  
Two-time Olympian, footballer Shankar Subramaniam, alias 'Babu' Narayan passed away here on Thursday. Narayan, who was India's goalkeeper during the 1956 and 1960 Olympics, was 86.  
Born in the Palakkad district, besides representing Maharashtra in football and basketball, Narayan emerged as one of the most reliable goalkeepers in India. His decade-long career for India also included the stellar effort of India finishing fourth in the 1956 Olympics and representing India in the 1964 Asian Games.

Rossi rides off into the sunset

The motorcycling icon is set to retire at the end of the year

MOTORSPORTS

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE**  
MILAN  
Italian motorcycling icon Valentino Rossi called time on a career spanning 26 years on Thursday, with the seven-time MotoGP champion announcing he would retire at the end of 2021.  
The swashbuckling rider who called himself "The Doctor" dominated the first decade of the 21st century winning seven world titles in MotoGP's elite category.  
His sheer love for racing saw him carry on until 42 and he departs with 115 victories including a record 89 in MotoGP, 235 podiums including 199 in MotoGP, also a record, and the longest career of any rider in the sport's premier class.  
Son of a motorbike racer Rossi started in 125cc with Aprilia in 1996. He won the title the following season, then moved up to 250cc where he won a title with Aprilia in 1999.  
Rossi was runner-up in his first season in 2000 before taking the final world title raced in the 500cc for-



Rossi... end of an era. ■AFP

mat a year later with Honda.  
He added six more in the new MotoGP class in 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2008 and 2009, the first with Honda, the rest with Yamaha.  
But he was eclipsed as Spaniard Marc Marquez, who won the world titles in 2013, 2014, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019.  
Rossi's last race victory dates back to 2017 at the Dutch Grand Prix, with his last pole position in 2018 and most recent podium the following year.  
Last season he finished 15th in the standings, unprecedented for a rider who had not finished outside the top 10 at any level since his debut in 1996.  
**Final chance**  
The 2021 season was to have been his final chance to turn the tide. Demoted to Yamaha-SRT, the satellite team of the Japanese manufacturer, he had to regain his flare or bow out.  
After nine races, he is only 19th. Talkative, funny, charming but also relentless, in competition, "Vale" nevertheless developed long-running feuds with a few of his main rivals.  
"He's a great guy but it is better to be in his camp," said French rider Johann Zarco.  
At the start of his career, Rossi had strained relations with compatriot Max Biaggi, who he edged for the 2001 title. Later there was the rivalry with Spaniard Jorge Lorenzo, who was his teammate at Yamaha, and who Rossi held off to take his last title in 2010. Most of all, there was Marquez, 14 years his junior.

Bopanna loses in doubles on a mixed day for Indians

INDIANS ABROAD

**SPORTS BUREAU**  
WASHINGTON  
Rohan Bopanna, seeded third in partnership with Ivan Dodig of Croatia, was beaten 7-5, 1-6, 11-9 by the wild card entrants Nick Kyrgios and Frances Tiafoe in the doubles pre-quarterfinals of the \$2,046,340 ATP tennis tournament in Washington.  
In the WTA event in Con-

cord, Ankit Raina in partnership with Mona Barthel of Germany made the doubles quarterfinals, beating Lizette Cabrera and Maddison Inglis 3-6, 6-4, 10-3.  
**The results:**  
**\$2,046,340 ATP, Washington, US: Doubles (pre-quarterfinals):** Nick Kyrgios (Aus) & Frances Tiafoe (US) bt Ivan Dodig (Cro) & Rohan Bopanna 7-5, 1-6, [11-9].  
**€44,820 Challenger, Liberec, Czech Republic: Doubles**

**(quarterfinals):** Geoffrey Blancaneaux & Maxime Janvier (Fra) bt Sriram Balaji & Arjun Kadhe 7-5, 6-4.  
**\$115,000 WTA, Concord, US: Doubles (pre-quarterfinals):** Mona Barthel (Ger) & Ankit Raina bt Lizette Cabrera & Maddison Inglis (Aus) 3-6, 6-4, [10-3].  
**\$25,000 ITF men, Decatur, US: Singles (first round):** Gijs Brouwer (Ned) bt Sasikumar Mukund 7-5, 5-7, 6-3.  
**\$15,000 ITF men, Monastir, Tunisia: Singles (pre-quarter-**

**nals):** Erik Crepaldi (Ita) bt Siddhant Bantia 6-3, 6-2.  
**First round:** Daniil Glinka (Est) bt Adil Kalyanpur 7-6(1), 2-0 (retired).  
**\$25,000 ITF women, Parnu, Estonia: Singles (first round):** Ekaterina Shalimova (Rus) bt Rutuja Bhosale 6-3, 6-2.  
**\$15,000 ITF women, Cairo, Egypt: Singles (pre-quarterfinals):** Meli Elizabeth Reasco Gonzalez (Ecu) bt Sathwika Sama 6-3, 6-2.

PKL auction from Aug. 29

**ASHWIN ACHAL**  
BENGALURU  
The player auction for Season 8 of the Pro Kabaddi League (PKL) will be held in Mumbai from August 29 to 31, PKL organisers Mashal Sports announced on Thursday. The league, which was not held last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, will commence in December this year.  
The player auction will see domestic, overseas, and New Young Players (NYPs) divided into four categories.  
Each category carries a base price - Category A (₹30 lakh), Category B (₹20 lakh),

Category C (₹10 lakh) and Category D (₹6 Lakhs).  
**Expanded player pool**  
More than 500 players are expected to be part of the auction pool.  
The player pool has been expanded to include all squad players from PKL Season 6 and 7, as well as all players who have represented the top-8 ranked teams of the Amateur Kabaddi Federation of India senior men's national kabaddi championship 2020 and 2021. The total salary purse applicable to each franchisee is ₹4.4 crore.

TTFI makes camps mandatory

**AMOL KARHADKAR**  
MUMBAI  
The Table Tennis Federation of India (TTFI) has decided to make it mandatory for all the top paddlers to attend national training camps in future and bar personal support staff of individual paddlers at the national camps.  
"The TTFI Executive Committee felt the sanctity of the national camps should be maintained and

the players should train together under national coaches going forward, so it will be compulsory for all the paddlers to attend national camps without their personal coaches or trainers or sparring partners," said TTFI secretary Arun Banerjee.  
The decision is in the aftermath of the pre-Olympic training camp which saw only two of India's four Tokyo-bound paddlers attending for its entire duration.




# 6

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