

Sushmita Dev quits Congress, joins **Trinamool Congress**



2.89 cr. vaccine doses still available with States, hospitals: govt.



Inflation in wholesale

Pacers bowl India to a sensational 151-run victory at Lord's





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prices falls marginally to 11.16% in July page 12

page 13



clear terms whether the go-

vernment has used Pegasus

or not... If you want time to

file a detailed affidavit, you

can take time," Chief Justice

of India N.V. Ramana ad-

dressed Solicitor-General

But Mr. Mehta said even a

"detailed affidavit" may not

appease the petitioners. He

asked whether the petition-

ers would swear to withdraw

from court if the government

said "no" to using the Pega-

sus in a further "one-page af-

fidavit". Mr. Mehta indicated

that things were not "so sim-

ple". Any discussion on this

Tushar Mehta

NEARBY



'Rapid response teams' to tackle new variants

NEW DELH The Delhi government will be forming 'rapid response teams' to tackle new variants of COVID-19. Each team will have a microbiologist or virologist and a clinician to monitor an area from where a variant emerges in the city.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

Man gets anticipatory bail in triple talaq case

NEW DELH The Delhi High Court has granted anticipatory bail to a man accused of 'triple talag'. subject to his joining the probe. He also has to deposit ₹4 lakh with the HC Registrar General within six weeks, half of which will be set aside towards the upbringing of his two daughters.

CITY ▶ PAGE 2

Parents of Dalit girl seek court-monitored probe

The parents of the nineyear-old girl, who was allegedly raped and murdered in Delhi Cantonment earlier this month, approached the Delhi High Court on Monday seeking adequate security and a court-monitored investigation into the case. **CITY** ▶ PAGE 2

Taliban assert control over Afghanistan

As police withdraw, militants take over checkpoints in Kabul

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Victorious Taliban militants patrolled Kabul on Monday after a stunningly swift end to Afghanistan's 20-year war, as thousands of people mobbed the city's airport trying to flee the group's feared hardline brand of Islamist rule.

President Ashraf Ghani flew out of the country on Sunday night as the insurgents encircled the capital, capping a military victory that saw them capture all cities in just 10 days.

After police and other government forces gave up their posts in Kabul on Sunday, Taliban militants took over checkpoints across the city and entered the presidential palace. Militants with rifles slung over their shoulders also walked through the streets of the Green Zone, the formerly heavily fortified district that houses most Embassies and international organisations.

The Taliban, however, sought to reassure the international community that Afghans should not fear them, and said they will not take revenge against those who supported the U.S.-backed alliance. In a message posted on social media, Taliban cofounder Abdul Ghani Baradar called on the militants to



Escape route: People climb atop a plane as others wait at the Kabul airport on Monday. • AFP

Afghans in India in agony

Thousands of Afghans residing in India fear for their kin back home. "I cried all night thinking about the situation. My entire family is there," says Matiullah, an Afghan living in Delhi. ▶ PAGE 9

remain disciplined after taking control of the city.

China ready for ties China was the first major nation to flag support for the Taliban, stating it was ready for "friendly relations".

There were desperate scenes at Kabul's airport on Monday as people tried to

UN appeal to insurgents

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres asked the insurgents to protect the rights of Afghans. "The world is following events there with a heavy heart and deep disquiet about what lies ahead."▶ PAGE 9

board the few flights available. Senior U.S. military officials say the chaos at the airport left seven people dead, including some who fell from a departing American military transport jet, ac-

EDITORIAL ▶ PAGE 6 MORE REPORTS ▶ PAGES 9 & 11

cording to Associated Press.

Govt. dismisses snooping charges

Affidavit in SC non-committal. say petitioners

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL

The government in the Supreme Court on Monday dismissed allegations of snooping using Pegasus spyware as mere "conjectures and surmises" based on "unsubstantiated media reports or incomplete or uncorroborated material".

A two-page affidavit filed by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) in the Supreme Court, however, said the government would form a Committee of Experts to dismatter. Attempts are being made to make it sensational

dealing with a sensitive

involve national

security. We are

Any discussion on this issue will

pel the "wrong narrative" spread by "vested interests". However, some of the pe-

titioners termed the government's response "skimpy" and "delightfully non-com-

They urged a three-judge Bench, led by Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana, to have

question does not deal with national security the Union Home Secretary

We want a straight answer.

Did the government or

any of its agencies use

grade technology to snoop on citizens. "The sum and substance is they [petitioners] are not satisfied with your limited af-

fidavit. They want to know in

clarify on oath in an affidavit

whether or not the govern-

ment used the military-

issue would involve national security.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

No Opposition parties in Nagaland Assembly

NPF joins Neiphiu Rio govt. to resolve peace process with extremist groups

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The 60-member Nagaland Assembly now has no MLA in the Opposition.

The Naga People's Front (NPF) - the State's only Opposition party - was on Monday inducted into the State government, headed by Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio, to "work collectively towards achieving a peaceful and amicable solution" to the protracted Naga political issue.

The issue pertains to the peace process with several extremist groups, primarily the Isak-Muivah faction of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland, which has been hanging fire for more 24 years.

The Nagaland House has an effective strength of 59 after the death of an MLA. The NPF had won 25 seats

in the 2018 Assembly election but suspended seven MLAs for hobnobbing with the Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party (NDPP).

Nagaland United Govt.

"The decision to accept the Opposition-less united government has been taken unanimously by the primary PDA partners, namely NDPP

the PDA government... Henceforth, the government shall be called Nagaland United Government," a joint statement said. Apart from Mr. Rio, the 12 signatories of the statement included Deputy Chief Minister and senior BJP leader Yangthungo Patton and NPF veteran T.R. Zeliang,

and BJP including 2 (two) In-

dependent MLAs supporting

a former Chief Minister. The Core Committee of the Parliamentary Committee on Naga political issue had earlier resolved and affirmed the joint united approach in achieving a solution to the

Naga political issue. The NPF legislature party had also endorsed the concept of Opposition-less government.

"The political parties shall appeal to all Naga Political Groups (read insurgent groups) to make serious efforts towards unity and reconciliation. The political parties shall ensure unity of their members in the Assembly on the issue," the statement reads.

Mr. Rio was with the NPF before falling out with the party and joining the NDPP floated ahead of the 2018 Nagaland polls.

⁺ Afghans in India fear for their kin

Students appeal for visa extension

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

As visuals of fleeing residents dominated television screens, with the Taliban having wrested control from the Western-backed government of Ashraf Ghani, thousands of Afghans in India, including students across the country, watched in fear for the future of women, children and young men.

For the 150 Afghan students studying in Osmania University in Hyderabad, the situation filled them with trepidation and concern. They don't want to go back home and yet worry for the safety of those left behind. "Don't come back home now!" is the plea from Afghans to their sons and daughters - a sentiment echoed by Afghan students in Hyderabad.

"I told my family I will not come back if situation there becomes hostile," said a 22year-old Afghan student, who did not wish to be named. "We are worried about human rights, women's rights, of our people. The Taliban are giving assurances, but only time will tell if they will stick to it. We don't want to see what happened 20 years ago."

Another immediate concern is about rising prices of food and other resources, and loss of jobs.

'Everyone is scared'

"Our families are not stepping out of home. There is silence now. But everyone is scared," said Samiullah, another Afghan student pursuing psychology in OU. There are around 200 Afghan students in Telangana, including 10 to 12 women.

Md Yousaf, president of the Afghan Students Association, said the visas of some students would expire by the end of August and others at the end of the year.



Farshid Mohamaddi, an Afghan residing in New Delhi, speaking about the crisis in his country.

"We request the Indian government to extend the visas and provide some financial help," he said.

Nightmare returns For many who fled the Tali-

ban, the nightmare has returned to haunt them. The "Afghan colony" in

Lajpat Nagar and Bhogal, New Delhi, that has grocery shops, medical stores, travel agencies and restaurants catering mostly to students, medical tourists and refugees from Afghanistan was abuzz with activity as people made enquiries about each other's families back home. Matiullah, who runs a travel agency in the market, said over the past few days, he has been receiving hundreds of calls from Afghans here on how they can book flight tickets or secure travel documents to ensure safe passage of their family members to India.

"I cried all night thinking about the situation. My entire family is back home. I came to India nine months ago after my father who was a soldier in the Afghanistan Army was killed by the Taliban outside our home," said 24-year-old Matiullah.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Two-child policy: U.P. law panel submits draft Bill vote of persons having more

'8,200 of the 8,500 suggestions received are in support of the Bill

OMAR RASHID

After reviewing over 8,000 suggestions from the public, the Uttar Pradesh State Law Commission on Monday submitted a report and draft Bill of a new population control law proposing two-child policy to the State government.

Panel chairperson Justice Aditya Nath Mittal said the

GS | CSAT

report and the draft of The Uttar Pradesh Population (Control, Stabilisation and Welfare) Bill, 2021 were submitted to the Chief Minister.

The Commission has last month uploaded the draft on its website and invited suggestions from people. The report said 8,200 of the 8,500 suggestions were in support of the Bill.

Voting right intact

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PRATIBHA VERMA

The Commission adopted the suggestion that special facilities extended to BPL families who have only one child and undertake voluntary sterilisation would be

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HYDERABAD AHMEDABAD LUCKNOW CHANDIGARH GUWAHATI

LUCKNOW

Admission Oper

DELHI • HEAD OFFICE: Apsara Arcade, Karol Bagh | CONTACT: 8468022022, 9019066066



party meeting ahead of the monsoon session of the U.P. Assembly on Monday. • PTI

extended to all couples irrespective of the BPL category.

CM Yogi Aditiyanath at an all-

It, however, rejected suggestions that the right to than two children be curtailed and that they also be barred from the benefit of "Right to vote is a constitutional and Fundamental

Right. Therefore, the State government has no competence to make such law," the A person who has more

than two children after the law comes into force would be debarred form several benefits such as welfare schemes. Ration card units would be limited to four and the person will be barred from contesting elections to local authority or any body of the local self-government, the draft Bill says.

He/she would also become ineligible to apply for State government jobs, will be barred from promotion in government services and will not receive any kind of subsidy. The provisions would come into force one year after the date of the publication of the gazette, the draft said.

Several incentives have been provided to people, including public servants, if they adopt the two-child norm by undergoing voluntary sterilisation.

104 cases in 0-18 age group

Odisha reports +

SATYASUNDAR BARIK BHUBANESWAR

Amid talks of a possible third wave of COVID-19. Odisha has reported over 100 new cases in the 0-18 age group for two consecutive days. On Monday, 104 out of 868 people reported infected were in the 0-18 age group, accounting for 11.98% of all fresh cases.

On Sunday, 138 out of 1,058 new cases were children aged below 18.

DETAILS ON ▶ PAGE 4



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Coming Soon to Boring Road, Patna and Hyderabad.

IN BRIEF

Duo sets themselves on fire outside SC, injured

A man and a woman set themselves on fire outside Supreme Court on Monday morning, the police said. They were rushed to Ram Manohar Lohia hospital where they are undergoing treatment.In a live video before the incident, the duo blamed several U.P. officials for victimising them following a rape complaint the woman had lodged.

Delhi records maximum temperature of 37.4°C

Delhi on Monday recorded a minimum and maximum temperature of 27.3 and 37.4 degrees Celsius, respectively, the IMD said. The relative humidity recorded at 5.30 p.m. was 49%. The weather department predicted partly cloudy skies for Tuesday.

Three held for extortion from vendors in Noida

Three men were arrested for allegedly extorting money from vendors in Noida, the police said. "An FIR was lodged at Sector 49 police spokesperson said.

Man accused in triple talaq case gets anticipatory bail from court

Judge directs him to deposit ₹4 lakh within 6 weeks; man claims accusations false

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has granted anticipatory bail to a man accused of pronouncing 'triple talaq' on his wife subject to his joining the investigation of the case as and when directed.

Justice Mukta Gupta also directed the man to deposit ₹4 lakh with the Registrar General of the High Court within six weeks, half of which will be set aside towards the upbringing of his two daughters.

The petition is disposed of directing that in the event of arrest, the petitioner be released on bail on his furnishing personal bond of ₹25,000 with one surety bond of the like amount subject to the satisfaction of the Arresting Officer/SHO concerned," the court ordered.

The High Court also directed the man to inform the court concerned in case of change of mobile number or the residential address



The man had on March 18, 2020 allegedly pronounced triple talaq and later performed a second marriage. His wife filed an FIR under Sections 498A (cruelty to a woman by her husband or any relative of her husband) and 4 (punishment for pronouncing talaq) of Muslim Women Protection of Rights on Marriage Act, 2019 registered at a police station in

'Still his legal wife'

Mangolpuri.

The man, in his plea, claimed that the allegations against him are "false and fabricated". He claimed that the woman is still his legally wedded wife. He said his When she unemployed. [complainant] gave birth to a female child, she was

threatened to be killed. In order to save her matrimonial life, her parents gave her ₹2L

wife is "habitual in creating nuisance at her in-laws' place and left the matrimonial home to go to her parental house and lodged this false and fabricated FIR".

The woman, in her FIR, said she got married to the man in October 2009 as per Muslim rites. She said in the marriage, her parents spent beyond their capacity to fulfil all the demands of her husband and in-laws.

She claimed that at the time of marriage, she was informed that her husband was running a medical store. But after marriage, it was revealed that the medical store was of her brother-in-law and the husband was

The woman also claimed that she was asked to bring money so that the husband could do some work. When she gave birth to a female child, she was threatened to be killed. In order to save her matrimonial life, her parents gave her ₹2 lakh.

On the birth of the second female child in 2013, things got worse and her father had to arrange for rented accommodation in Delhi and for all household expenses, the woman said. The woman had earlier also complained to the Delhi Commission of Women (DCW) and Superintendent of Police, Baghpat but no action was taken.

The court ordered that the "remaining amount of ₹2 lakh, which would be lying deposited in fixed deposit before this court will be subject to the final outcome in the trial or any settlement, arrived at between the par-

Parents of 9-year-old Dalit girl demand HC-monitored probe

They seek security, accuse 4 inside crematorium of rape, murder

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI Parents of the 9-year-old gir, who was allegedly raped and murdered in Delhi Cantonment earlier this month, approached the Delhi High Court on Monday seeking to provide adequate security and a court-monitored investigation into the case.

The parents, in their plea, alleged that the crime was committed by four accused inside a crematorium located in Purani Nangal village.

'Destroying evidence'

"Not only this, the body was thrown in the burning fire of the crematorium by the accused persons for the purpose of destroying the evidence of their sin," the plea said.

The petition said the parents belong to the "wretched and poor most section of the society and are totally illiterate".

"It has come to the knowledge of the petitioners that after committing rape with the deceased daughter of

STAFF REPORTER

A 38-vear-old labourer alleg-

Police said the victims

have been identified as Laali

(40) and her daughter Ruby

(18) and the accused as Ra-

mu. They are all residents of

Police said that Ramu

was Laali's late husband's

friend and often visited

them. On August 15, he visit-

ed again and asked for Ru-

by's hand in marriage but

the mother refused stating

the age difference. Also, she

wants her daughter to study

buy the argument and start-

However, Ramu didn't

Kanganheri

Kapashera.

village



killed by the accused persons...When the mother of the deceased reached the crematorium in search of her daughter, she was told by the accused persons that her daughter died due to electrocution," the plea

"It is respectfully submitted that there were injuries on the hands of the deceased and there was bleeding from her nose. The petitioners were not allowed by the accused persons to touch the body of the deceased," the plea added.

"After hearing the heart wrenching crying of the petitioners, the crowd assembled there..put water in the

ed arguing with Laali. He

eventually picked up a

sharp weapon and attacked

Laali, after which Ruby in-

tervened to save her mother

Neighbours and locals then

caught hold of Ramu and

thrashed him before calling

police. All three were

where they are undergoing

Police (Dwarka) Santosh Ku-

mar Meena said: "Based on

the victim's statement, we

have registered a case of at-

tempt to murder under Sec-

tion 307 of the Indian Penal

Code at Chhawla police sta-

tion. The accused has been

arrested and is in police cus-

Deputy Commissioner of

to the hospital

but was also attacked.

Alert neighbours

rushed

treatment.

Man stabs woman, mother

Attempt to murder case filed: police

for rejecting proposal

...the truth can be proved only by a court-monitored

burning pyre of the deceased and some of the remains of the deceased were obtained," it said.

"The police reached there but the total focus of the police was to hush up/ sabotage the case. The petitioners were taken to the police station and throughout the night they were kept in the police station where they were tortured and pressured by the police and its agents to compromise the case," the petition claimed.

Despite the fact that the case is now transferred to the Crime Branch of Delhi police, the petitioners have no faith in the present investigation, the plea said adding, "the truth can be proved only by a court monitored special investigation team (SIT)".

DUTA seeks one-time regulation for absorption of ad hoc teachers

STAFF REPORTER

The Delhi University Teachers' Association (DUTA) on Monday demanded a onetime regulation for the absorption of ad hoc teachers at the university. The teachers' body said there were around 4,500 ad hoc teachers currently in the varsity. Stating that the indefinite

nature of ad hoc service was in violation of relevant guidelines of the university, the DUTA said: "The service conditions are discriminatory and exploitative despite fulfilling all requisite academic qualifications and contributing to the academic and the corporate growth of the university in the same way as their permanent colleagues. It is an extremely unfortunate situation and a denial of their basic rights to a dignified life."

In a letter to Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, the DUTA said a statement made in the Lok Sabha about the number of ad hoc teachers in the university was "inaccurate".

"It is really shocking that the annexure states that there are 58 ad hoc teachers in the University of Delhi as on April 1, 2021. This is far from the reality – close to

vstem for the following work:

BSES



4,500 teachers are working ad hoc basis in DU with the number increasing every day as no recruitment have taken place for more than ten years now and with many teachers superannuating in the meantime. Though these these teachers perform the same duties as their permanent colleagues, they have been denied basic rights to a dignified life," read the letter to the Minister.

DUTA President Rajib Ray said specific regulations should be framed, which permits the regularisation of serving temporary or adhoc teachers on permanent basis through a one-time absorption. "Absorption of serving ad hoc and temporary teachers is the only way in which posts can be filled ion a permanent basis at such a large scale in a short period," said Mr. Ray.

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER
The Project Manager UPRNN LTD Unit Banda invites for and on behalf of Managing

Director U.P. Rajkiya Nirman Nigam Ltd. online percentage rate bids in two bid

NIT NO: 429/Banda unit/RNN/Laxman pahadi/2021 dt 13.08.2021, Name of

work: Construction and Development of Laxman Pahadi District Chitrakoot

Estimated Bid Value: Rs. 88.57 Lacs (Civil Works: Rs. 88.57 Lakh, Electrical

Works: Rs. 0.00 Lakh), Earnest Money: Rs. 1.77 Lacs, Period of Completion: 6

The bid forms and other details can be obtained / downloaded from the websit

CORRIGENDUM NOTICE

Tender No. OP2/08/2021-22 - for the replacement of existing

old/outlived/burnt ACSR with ACSR 103mm2 in Ram Darbar

Phase-I & II for improvement of LD System under electricity

The subject cited tender due to be opened on dated i.e. 16.08.2021

at 16.00 Hrs. is hereby extended upto 23.08.2021 at 14.00 Hrs. for

uploading and opening date i.e. 23.08.2021 at 16.00 Hrs. due to

ʻop' S/ Divn. No-5, Indl. Area, Ph-I, U.T. Chandigarh.

All the other terms and conditions shall remain the same.

nttps://etender.up.nic.in. The NIT is also available on http://www.uprnn.co.in.

nonths (i/c rainy season). Last time and date of submission of bid 9.00 PM on Dt

Farmers to mark nine months of agitation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

Farmers protesting against the Centre's three contentious agricultural laws will organise a national convention on August 26 to mark the completion of nine months of their agitation, according to a statement from the Samyukt Kisan Morcha on Monday.

To mark the completion of nine months of historic, continuous peaceful protests by lakhs of farmers, Samyukt Kisan Morcha has decided to hold a national convention on August 26.

"This all-India convention will witness the participation of representatives of hundreds of farmers' organisations which have been part of the ongoing protests locally, regionally and nationally," the umbrella body of over 40 farm unions said.

Details regarding the venue of the national convention will be worked out later, a farmer leader said.

Date: 17.08.2021

BSES Yamuna Power Limited, New Delhi

Homeward-bound



hometown in Madhya Pradesh. • SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

edly stabbed a woman and her mother for rejecting his marriage proposal in Dwarka on Sunday, police said.



House help killed in robbery incident

Main accused identified, manhunt on; jewellery, cash missing

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

A house help was killed in a robbery incident in Central Delhi's Patel Nagar on Sunday evening, the police said on Monday.

DCP (Central) Jasmeet Singh said the victim has been identified as Sarita (35). The police received a PCR call at 5.30 p.m. stating that a house help was injured during a robbery incident in a house in east Patel Nagar.

On reaching the spot, the police were told that the incident happened when some labourers were working inside the The accused [labourers] were known to the family for over

three years

SENIOR POLICE OFFICER

house and Sarita was in the kitchen. At that time, the owners had left the house for lunch.

They had told Sarita to leave the house only after the labourers finished

"When the owners returned, they found the help lying on the floor," Mr. Singh said, adding that she was rushed to a hospital where she was declared dead.

The police said cash and jewellery are missing from the house.

Based on a complaint, a case under Sections 302 (punishment for murder), 394 (voluntarily causing hurt in committing robbery), 397 (robbery), 34 (common intention) of the IPC has been registered. Teams are looking for the absconding accused.

A senior officer said two main accused and their wives have been identified and they were known to the family for over three years, the police added.

Constable shoots at self, undergoing treatment

STAFF REPORTER

A 36-year-old constable allegedly shot at himself with his service pistol while on duty on Monday morning. He is undergoing treatment, the police said.

A senior officer said the incident happened when the constable was on picket duty at Vasant Vihar police station. "A PCR call was received at 6 a.m. regarding the incident. He was rushed to AIIMS Trauma Centre where he isl undergoing treatment," the officer said.

Suicide prevention helpline: Sanjivini, Society for Mental Health, Telephone: 011-4076 9002, Monday-Saturday, 10 a.m. -7.30

Commission agent held for posing as CBI official

Fake ID card seized from impersonator

STAFF REPORTER

A man, who works as a commission agent for taxi trips and property rental, has been arrested for allegedly impersonating as a CBI offi-

cial, police said Monday. DCP (South-West) Ingit Pratap Singh said the accused has been identified as Rakesh Kumar Yadav, a resident of Haryana's Jhajjar. He was arrested from Kishangarh on Sunday.

Police said that on Independence Day, Yadav was riding his bike when the police deployed at Sanjay Van

asked him to stop. But he tried to escape. Police then erected barricades and held

He was found to be drunk and he impersonated himself as a CBI inspector with an ID card hanging around his neck. But after a close look, the card was found to be fake, they said. During interrogation, he accepted that he made it himself and used it whenever the police in Delhi and elsewhere stopped him, police said, adding that his fake identity card, voter ID, driving licence and Aad-

haar card were seized.

Minor sisters killed in Noida building fire

Blaze caused due to short circuit in electricity board

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Two sisters, aged 9 and 12, died in a fire that broke out on Monday in a five-storey building in Noida apparently due to a short circuit, the police said.

The blaze broke out around 5.30 am and was soon controlled by fire department officials who had rushed to the site under Phase 3 police station limits, said Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (Central Noida) Ankur Ag-

The fire broke out in the ground floor of the building in Garhi Chaukhandi village, forcing evacuation of all residents, he said. Some of the residents

who were caught in the fire were admitted to a nearby hospital, he added. "Prima facie, the fire

was triggered due to a short circuit in the main electricity board of the building located on its ground floor," Aggarwal "The family of Dinesh

Solanki lived on the ground floor of the building. Unfortunately, his two daughters died in the incident," the officer said. Others living on the upper floors of the building were evacuated with the help of the fire brigade and neighbours, he said.

High Court asks Centre not to take any coercive steps against NGO

It couldn't file annual returns due to technical issues on portal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The Delhi High Court on Monday directed the Centre not to take any coercive step against an NGO for not being able to file its annual return as mandated under the Foreign Contributions Regulation Act (FCRA) due to purported technical difficulties in filing the form on the Ministry of Home Affairs

(MHA) portal. Justice Rekha Palli issued notice to the MHA and asked it to respond to the petition and listed it for further hearing on September 3.

"While issuing notice to respondent no. 1 [MHA], it is directed that no coercive ac-

titioner [NGO] till the next date of hearing," the court Petitioner Shree Swamin-

tion be taken against the pe-

arayan Mandir said it is an NGO carrying out social, devotional, medical and religious charitable activities and it is aggrieved by its inability to file its annual return for Financial Year 2019-20, as mandated under the FCRA due to the technical difficulties in filing form FC-4 electronically on FCRA portal of MHA.

Advocates Manoj Khanna and Rajat Bhatia, appearing for the NGO, said it was impossible for the petitioner to fill out the form FC-4 and comply with the requirements of the law due to the technical issues on the

"A failure to file annual returns within the prescribed timelines, carries dire consequences under the FCRA. It can lead to heavy penalties and even cancellation of registration under the FCRA," the plea said.

It sought to direct the government to allow the NGO to upload the form FC-4 on the portal to enable it to file the annual returns for the Financial Year 2019-20. It also sought to direct the authorities to extend the last date of June 30, 2021 for filing of annual returns.

Executive Engineer,

Chandigarh, U.T.

Electricity (OP) Division No. 2

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed tenders under two Bid System (Unpriced & Priced) is invited for following jobs: Cost of | Due Date & Time | Date & Time Brief Work Description Cost (₹) EMD (₹) of Submission MC/BY/21-22 SUPPLY OF SINGLE PHASE OIL FILLED COMPLETELY SELF PROTECTED (CSP) TRANSFORMER OF RATING RS/SV/23 15:00 HRS 15:00 HRS For details in respect of Equipment/BOM/Services, Qualifying requirements, Terms & conditions, purchase/submission of tende documents, corrigendum etc. please visit our website <u>www.bsesdelhi.com</u> -> BSES YAMUNA POWER LTD -na, Delhi-110032 | CIN: U40109DL2001PLC111525

Timings

DELINI					
TUESDAY, AUG. 17					
	RISE	05:52	SET	18:59	
	RISE	14:40	SET	00:18	
WED)NESD/	AY, AUG.	18		
	RISE	05:53	SET	18:58	
6 .	0165	15 46		01 10	

THURSDAY, AUG. 19 RISE 05:53 SET 18:57

RISE 16:47 SET 02:09

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	37	27
Safdarjang	37	27
Palam	37	28

Delhi Palam Today 38°C A warm day with partly

cloudy sky and light winds. Dry

Delhi Palam Tomorrow 37°C Drv and warm weather likely over the area with partly cloudy sky. Thunderstorm may occur towards evening

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THE HINDU

'Rapid response teams' to tackle new variants

Move follows National Centre for Disease Control directive

NIKHIL M BABU NEW DELHI

The Delhi government will be forming 'rapid response teams' to react when new variants of interest of COVID-19 are found in the city through genome sequencing, according to officials.

Each team will have a microbiologist or virologist and a clinician among others to monitor an area from which the variant of interest emerges in the city.

"The team will collect data about the new variant of concern from the lab and quickly get into action. The team will visit the area from where it was found and do proper contact tracing and these samples will be sent for genome sequencing. Also, the area will be closely monitored," a Delhi government official

tions from the National Centre for Disease Control



A COVID-19 test in progress in Delhi. • SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

(NCDC) last week

"There will be better monitoring and the Central government will also be kept in the loop about these developments. The Delhi government is yet to decide as to how many such teams will be formed, but most probably one team will be formed for three to four districts," the official

gate vaccine breakthrough cases from genomic surveillance and epidemiological perspectives and also sent samples for 'whole genome sequencing'

Meanwhile, the city reported 27 new COVID-19 cases in the past 24 hours, taking the total cases to 14,37,118, as per a government bulletin. There were no new deaths reported and the total number of deaths stood at 25,069. The COVID-19 vaccine stock of the would last for six days, as per

Govt. resends file to L-G for panel approval

Committee will probe into deaths due to oxygen crisis during second wave

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Monday said that the government has resent a file to the Lieutenant-Governor for approval for a committee to inquire into alleged deaths due to oxygen shortage in the city.

Mr. Sisodia said that he has also sent a letter to the Union Home Minister requesting him to direct the L-G to approve the inquiry committee constituted by the Delhi government.

Responsible govt.

Safe travel

"The courts and the Central government have asked States for the number of deaths due to lack of oxygen. A high-level committee of medical experts will be

Workers refill medical oxygen cylinders for patients at a city hospital in New Delhi. • FILE PHOTO: SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

constituted by the Delhi government to probe into the deaths due to lack of oxygen in Delhi. We have sent the file for approval of the inquiry committee to the L-G in this regard and hope that the L-G will approve the committee soon," the Minis-

ter said.

Mr. Sisodia said that as a responsible government, it should not run away from the issue, but should fix the system and carry out reforms instead of "hiding the information".

"Hiding information is

not the hallmark of a good governance model," he said. He said that the L-G should pass the file so that the committee can complete its investigation and send its report to the Central govern-

ment and the court so that

correct data can be dis-

closed to the public. In July, the Central government had said that no deaths due to lack of oxygen have been specifically reported by States or UTs during the second wave.

It has been a controversial issue since then with the Delhi government initially saying that data was not sought from the State and later changing its stand to not enough time was given to send the data to the Central government.

The NCDC has also told the The move follows direc-Delhi government to investicity on Monday morning

Total number of DTC and cluster buses running on Delhi roads now is 6,793

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

A fresh lot of 32 air-conditioned low-floor CNG-propelled cluster buses was flagged-off from Rajghat Cluster Depot here on Monday, taking the tally of Delhi's fleet of public buses to 6,793.

According to the government, 452 BS-VI compliant buses had been added to the fleet since March, 2020. The buses were flagged off by Transport Minister Kailash Gahlot.

Number of routes

The total number of DTC and cluster buses running on Delhi's road till now is 6,793 of which DTC has 3,760 buses and 3,033 buses are operated under the cluster scheme.

Currently, cluster buses



The new low-floor air-conditioned buses during inauguration at Rajghat bus depot on Monday. • SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

are operated on 306 city routes network in Delhi. The additional 32 buses will be deployed on four additional cluster routes which include 993, 380, 390 and 244.

The first lot of 100 AC lowfloor buses was launched on the city route network in February 2020 under the cluster scheme. During the pandemic period from March 2020, 452 new buses have been inducted under the

cluster scheme. According to the govern-

ment, these BS-VI compliant buses feature modern technology, including real-time passenger information systems, CCTV cameras, GPS, fire detection and suppression system.

No purchase

The Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC), the government admitted in reply to a question during the recently-concluded monsoon session of the Delhi Assembly, has not purchased a single bus since 2015.

Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor alleged the Delhi government had failed to provide a strong public transportation system to the citizens of Del-"inherent hi due to

'List action plan to deal with possible third COVID-19 wave'

Passengers travelling abroad undergo COVID-19 testing at IGI airport in New Delhi on

Monday. The cost is ₹5,000 per test with results in 45-60 minutes. • SANDEEP SAXENA

Govt. should ensure beds are reserved in hospitals: Bidhuri

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the Opposition in the Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri on Monday asked the Delhi government to spell out its action plan to deal with the possible third wave of COVID-19 infection in the Capital.

Mr. Bidhuri demanded that hospitals in all the 14 districts of the Capital be notified to ensure people don't have to run from pillar to post for treatment.

This, he stated, was important since it was being

said that children were expected to be "most impacted" by the third wave.

Impact on children "Experts have time and

again warned that the third wave is likely to badly impact the children and that is why it is even more important to take adequate measures to deal with any kind of situation or crisis," he ad-

Of the total population impacted around the globe, nearly 10% were children,

Keeping this in mind, he said the Delhi government should ensure that beds are reserved in a majority of the hospitals for children.

Kept ready

Paramedical staff, including doctors, nurses and adequate quantity of medicine and oxygen, he further said, was also to be kept ready since a vaccine for children was yet to be put in action making it very important to ensure that children were

Reply to plea on NDMC quorum: HC

STAFF REPORTER

The Delhi High Court on Monday asked the Centre and the Delhi government to respond to a petition seeking to appoint four members of the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) so that the minimum requirement of 13 members is complete for its efficacious functioning.

Justice Rekha Palli also issued notices to New Delhi Municipal Council and listed the case for further hearing on January 12 next year. The petition filed by Ganga Ram and Pawan Thapliyal said they were aggrieved due to failure on part of NDMC in discharging its discretionary functions in terms of the provisions of the NDMC Act.

Advocate Amit Sahni, representing the petitioners, said the NDMC is functioning with nine members only as the Central government has not nominated four members.

'Committed to meet 24x7 water demand

STAFF REPORTER

Water Minister Satyendar Iain on Monday said that the Delhi government is constructing 'unique water extraction wells' to meet the 24x7 water demand in the city and it will leave no stone unturned to bring the project to reality.

Mr. Jain reviewed the progress of the water supply project with officials of the Delhi Jal Board, the Mistatement.

derground ing and 24x7 water supply can be achieved," Mr. Jain

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

A court here on Monday ad-

journed the hearing on the

bail application of former

Congress councillor Ishrat

Jahan in the Delhi riots con-

spiracy case till August 20,

after the prosecutor sought

more time and said that he

Ms. Jahan, along with

several others, has been

booked under the Unlawful

Activities (Prevention) Act

(UAPA) in the case and they

are accused of being the

"masterminds" of the Fe-

bruary 2020 violence,

which had left 53 people

cannot "talk in the air".

NEW DELHI

Links between Upadhyay and another accused found: police

Six people were arrested for hate slogans at Jantar Mantar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Advocate and former Delhi BJP spokesperson Ashwini "Preet, one of the ac-

cused, and Upadhyay are nior police officer said.



A Delhi court on Wednesday had granted bail to Mr. Upadhyay, who has denied any involvement in the alleged anti-Muslim

Muslim slogans being raised during a protest at Jantar Mantar here was

widely circulated on social media, following which the police registered a case. Hundreds of people had

attended the protest organised by 'Bharat Jodo Aandolan' at Jantar Mantar on August 8. The police had arrested six people, including Mr. Upadhyay, after an FIR was registered at the Connaught Place police station in connection with the incident.

Mr. Upadhyay had earlier said: "I have submitted a complaint to the police to examine the video which went viral. If the video is authentic, then strict action should be taken against the persons who were involved in it."

DTTE staffers to get vaccinated

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The Delhi government has ordered the vaccination of staffers working at various institutions under the Directorate of Training and Technical Education (DTTE) since they have been at the forefront of the fight against the pandemic.

The DTTE has also issued a list of dedicated vaccination sites where teaching and non-teaching staff can get inoculated.

"All the teaching and non-teaching staff working in various institutions under DTTE have been at the forefront as Covid Warriors against the GNCTD's fight against COVID-19 pandemic," the order said.

To maximise the safety and health of the education community, the DTTE requires all teaching and non-teaching staff of its institutions to be vaccinated on an urgent basis, it said.

quarters of the DTTE.

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Gahlot flags off fleet of 32 cluster buses

nister's office said in a "All work related to unreservoirs

(UGRs), boring, tubewells and sewage treatment plants should be completed in time so that the objectives of Yamuna clean-

Upadhyay had links with one of the five accused arrested for allegedly raising communal slogans at Jantar Mantar here during a recent protest, the Delhi police claimed on Monday.

connected to each other. Mr. Upadhyay had mentioned Preet's name in the application form submitted to the police before organising the event," a se-

The police had earlier arrested six people, including Mr. Upadhyay, in connection with the case.

I cannot argue like

you [Pradeep

AMIT PRASAD

Teotia]. I need to

be fully prepared. I

can't talk in the air

dead and over 700 injured.

tor Amit Prasad, who repre-

sents Delhi Police and was

slated to argue on the bail

plea, sought an adjourn-

ment from Additional Ses-

sions Judge Amitabh Rawat

stating that he needs more

Advocate Pradeep Teo-

tia, appearing for Ms. Ja-

time to prepare the case.

Special Public Prosecu-

Court adjourns hearing on plea of former Congress councillor Ishrat Jahan



sloganeering incident. A video showing anti-

Riots: police seek time to argue UAPA bail plea

han, objected to the adjournment request and apprised ASJ Rawat that the matter is pending for the that the investigating agenlast six months. cy does not have an iota of "I cannot argue like you. evidence against her in the I need to be fully prepared. conspiracy case. She also I cannot talk in the air," the asked if it was "wrong to prosecutor told Mr. Teotia, impelling the judge to inter-

get "personal" with each other. Ms. Jahan's counsel had concluded his arguments on her bail plea on July 23 and the SPP was slated to argue before the court today. The matter will now be

vene and ask them to not

fight over "petty issues" or

heard on August 20. Earlier, Ms. Jahan, through her lawyer, said

have a political affiliation". Besides her, JNU students Natasha Narwal and Devangana Kalita, former student leader Umar Khalid, Jamia Coordination Committee members Safoora Zargar, former AAP councillor Tahir Hussain and several others have al-

so been booked under the

anti-terror law. Published by N. Ravi at Kasturi Buildings, 859 & 860, Anna Salai, Chennai-600002 and Printed by S. Ramanujam at HT Media Ltd. Plot No. 8, Udyog Vihar, Greater Noida Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P. 201306, on behalf of THG PUBLISHING PVT LTD., Chennai-600002. Group Editorial Officer: Krishna Prasad. Editor: Suresh Nambath (Responsible for selection of news under the PRB Act)

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The order will be applic-

able to all officers and officials posted at the head-

Mapping exercise rectifies errors for NFSA families

As many as 25 lakh mistakes rectified during the first phase

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

An exercise launched in Rajasthan for mapping and seeding of beneficiaries of the National Food Security Act (NFSA) has led to rectification of errors relating to over 7 lakh families in 95 blocks. After the completion of first phase, the upcoming phases of the exercise will be run in a "mission mode".

State Food and Planning Secretary Naveen Iain said here on Monday that as many as 25 lakh mistakes in the

records were rectified during the first phase. The work, related to the seeding of ration cards of about 9 lakh families getting the benefit of NFSA with their Jan Aadhaar cards, is under way during the second phase.

Mr. Jain said the work for lifting and distribution of foodgrains allotted under the NFSA and the Prime Minister's Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana would be expedited in the districts with slow progress. The quantity of alrecorded in the point of sale machines within the stipulated time-frame, he said.

The targets set in the second phase of the exercise would be achieved through regular supervision, Mr. Jain said. He said the benefits of the public distribution system would be extended to both rural and urban families through Jan Aadhaar cards, for which 111 blocks had been identified during the second phase.

Petrol bomb hurled at Meghalaya CM's residence

Situation in Shillong tense as BJP asks police chief to resign

GUWAHATI

Masked miscreants hurled a petrol bomb at Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma's private residence in Shillong late Sunday night as the law and order situation continued to remain

Officers said the Molotov cocktail landed inside the compound of the CM's residence in the Laimer area in Shillong. It did not do any damage, they said.

Shillong spiralled into unrest during Independence Day on Sunday, two days after the police gunned down Cheristerfield Thangkhiew, a former extremist leader, at



Conrad K. Sangma •

The East Khasi Hills district administration imposed an indefinite curfew from 8 p.m. on Sunday. The Home Department suspended Internet and mobile data services for 48 hours in four districts, including East Khasi Hills.

Director-General of Police

R. Chandranathan said the police fired at Thangkhiew in "self-defence after he pulled out a knife and attacked them". The police had gone to Thangkhiew's residence to arrest him in connection with a recent IED blast in Shillong.

Health Minister and senior BJP leader Alexander Laloo Hek asked the DGP to resign and demanded a judicial inquiry into the "encounter death". He said the police chief should resign on moral ground.

cial Director General of Police advised people not to travel to Shillong.

Odisha reports over 100 cases in 0-18 age group in two days Experts had predicted children could be affected more during the third wave

SATYASUNDAR BARIK BHUBANESWAF

Amidst talks of possible third wave of COVID-19, Odisha has reported more than 100 new cases among population in the age group of 0-18 years consecutively for past two days.

The Health and Family Welfare on Monday issued bulletin saying 104 out of 868 persons reported to be infected during the past 24 hours were in the age group of 0-18 group, accounting for 11.98%

On Sunday, 138 out of 1,058 were children aged below 18 and they had tested positive for the coronavirus, constituting 11.15%. Some ex-

perts had predicted that children could be affected more during the third wave.

"Children in age group of 0-18 years are yet to be vaccinated. As per the prediction of the public health experts, there is possibility of increased incidence of CO-VID-19 cases amongst the population of this age group in the eventuality of a third wave," Pradipta Mohapatra, Additional Chief Secretary (Health), wrote to all Collectors recently.

Urging the Collectors and Chief District Medical Officers to be prepared for managing high number of cas-Mr. Mohapatra laid emphasis on the constitution of a district level task force for effective monitoring and supervision.

District level committee The committee should be headed by the Collector while other members should be CDMO, public health officers, senior paediatric spe-

cialist, anaesthesia specialist

and any other co-opted members. "This committee should regularly do the gap analysis, monitor and take steps for remedial action. The respective Collectors shall take a meeting in this regard within a week," he said in his letter

All paediatric cases of influenza-like illness and severe acute respiratory infections need to be listed and swab collection of children of 0-18 age group should be ensured for RT-PCR testing in all healthcare facilities

capacity of different inten-Mohapatra said.

cumbed to COVID-19 following death of 66 persons during past 24 hours.

across the State. About 50% of the existing

sive care units should be isolated and earmarked for paediatric COVID cases, Mr. The total COVID-19 cases have increased to 9,95,433 while 6,953 have so far suc-

Meanwhile, the government on Monday opened schools for Class IX students.

Three Maoists surrender in Odisha

STAFF REPORTER

Three hardcore cadres of outlawed (Maoist), including two area committee members, surrendered before the Odisha police on Mon-

All the three Left-Wing Extremists, who hail from Chhattisgarh, belong to the Kodanga-Mahanadi-Sanjukta area committee operating under the Kandhamal- Kalahandi-Boudh-Nayagarh (KKBN) division of the Odisha State committee of the CPI (Maoist). The arrested were identified as Lakma Madvi, of Bijapur district in Chhattisgarh, and Ganga Madkam and Suka Sodi, both residents of Suk-

2 kg brown sugar seized

his residence on August 13 morning.

former Meghalava's

Meanwhile, Assam's Spe-

In a special drive, the

STAFF REPORTER BHUBANESWAR

in Odisha

The Special Task Force of the Odisha police has seized brown sugar weighing more than 2 kg from Balasore district on Sunday.

"A raid was conducted

at Jaleswar Market in Balasore district. Three accused were apprehended. During the search, brown sugar weighing 2.402 kg and other incriminating materials were seized from their possession," said the STF here on Mon-

STF has seized more than 38 kg. of brown sugar and heroin and more than 84 quintals, 28 kg of ganja since 2020 and arrested more than 100 drug dealers and peddlers.

Bengal BJP leaders held for protests, released

'Khela Hobe Dibas' triggers tension as party observes 'Save West Bengal Day'

SHIV SAHAY SINGH

Party (supporters along with State president Dilip Ghosh and Leader of the Opposition Suvendu Adhikari were taken into custody on August 16 when they protested against the State government plans of "Khela Hobe Dibas (Day to observe game is on slogan)".

DMA violation

The BJP leadership observed "Poschim Bongo Bachao Divas (Save West Bengal Day)". The Kolkata police claimed that the BJP leaders were taken into preventive custody for assembling at Rani Rasmoni Avenue and Mayo Road in violation of the Disaster Management Act due to the COVID-19 restrictions.

President of the BJP Yuva Morcha and MP Saumitra



Police detaining BJP leader Suvendu Adhikari and others in Kolkata on Monday. ■PTI

Khan, former Union Minister and MP Deboshree Chowdhury, footballer and BJP leader Kalyan Choubey and Mina Devi Purohit were also

A scuffle took place between the BJP supporters and the police as the former refused to leave the protest venue .The BJP leaders were ta-

For enquiries on

announcements in this

ken to the Lalbazar police headquarters and were released

"The police arrested us despite the peaceful sit-in in front of Gandhi Murti. It's a part of a constant effort to choke democracy, but we will always stand against this tyrant ruler," Mr. Ghosh said on twitter.

Corporation, Jharkhand.

The TMC leadership, including Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, had maintained that the day has been chosen in memory of the 16 football fans who died in a stadium stampede on August 16, 1980. The BJP referred to the Great Calcutta Killings on the same date in 1946 where thousands of people had lost lives. At several places in the city and the State, the TMC leaders and supporters observed the day by distributing footballs and organising games.

Reshuffle in TMC

In a major reshuffle of the TMC organisation, six Ministers were removed from the post of district president. Key Ministers like Jyotipriya Mullick, Swapan Debnath and Soumen Mahapatra were among them.

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Medininagar Municipal Corporation No.- UDHD/MMC/01/2021-22 Date: 16.08.2021

<u>Invitation for Expression of Interest (3rd Call)</u> MedininagarMunicpal Corporation invites proposals for Design, Build and Transfer of NATURE based Sewerage Freatment System "PHYTORID" or any other method superior than this and Construction of drain for waste water disposal up to STP. Treat incoming waste water through scientific bioremediation method under project of Beautification and Development of Municipal Talab at Medininagar Municpal

Description of works: -To provide Design, Build and Transfer of STP (1MLD) NATURE based Sewerage Treatment System on "PHYTORID" Technology or any other method superior than this. Construction of drains around the pond to collect waste water to STP (Sketch Plan of drain attached in BID). Establishment of STP in Pond 3 and treated water intake in Pond-2 through construction of proper vent.

Interested Firm/Organization having valid license from CSIR-NEERI/ any other Government approved organization can submit details proposal of "PHYTORID" Technology or any other method superior than this for (1 MLD STP) with 3 years O/M installation in Municipal Talab at Medininagar.

Priority will be given to the Organization or Firm

having work Experience in the similar project.

Valid joint Ventures are acceptable.

Interested party can visit project site prior to submission of their proposal. One time nonrefundable proposal fee Rs. 10,000/- (Ten Thousand Only). should be submitted in the form of demand draft in favour of Municipal Commissioner, Medininagar

Medininagar Municipal Corporation reserve right to postpone or cancel this Proposal at any stage due to administrative reasons and no claim shall be entertained on this account. For further information you may contact vide email:

municipalcouncil.medininagar@gmail.com Contact no : 9431138024, 9304883244 Proposal document can be downloaded from the website http://:udhd.jharkhand.gov.in & notice of the Medininagar Municipal Corporation from 18/08/2021 to 06/09/2021 Last date of proposal submission with all relevant details and demand draft is 07/09/2021 up to 1:00 PM at Medininagar Municipal

Corporation Office. More details such as selection process, eligibility criteria etc are provided in the RFP document The RFP document can be downloaded from the Official website https://jharkhand

tenders.gov.in.					
Schedule of Bidding Process					
Sl No.	Event Description	Date			
1	Availability of bid on the website	18/08/2021 At 11:00 AM			
2	Tender Fee (INR)	10,000/-			
3	Earnest Money Deposit (INR)	3,00,000/-			
4	Last date for receiving queries	28/08/2021 upto 03:00 PM			
5	Pre-bid meeting	28/08/2021 at 03:30 PM			
6	Corporation response to queries	31/08/2021 upto 05:00 PM			
7	Online Proposal Due Date or PDD	06/09/2021 upto 05:00 PM			
8	Due Date for Submission of Hard Copy (Tender Cost, EMD, Power of Attorney)	07/09/2021 upto 01:00 PM			
9	Opening of Technical Bid	07/09/2021 at 03:30 or thereafter			
10 Opening of the financial Bid To be announced la					

Note:- Only Online tender is Permissible.

Municipal Commissioner. Medininagar Municipal Corporation. PR 251468 Urban Development(21-22).D



SC to hear plea of Gauri Lankesh's sister in Sept.

The Supreme Court on Monday scheduled the final disposal of a petition filed by the sister of murdered activist Gauri Lankesh against the dropping of organised crime charges against an accused in the case for September 8. A Bench led by Justice A.M. Khanwilkar had issued notice to Karnataka on the petition filed by Kavitha

Trial court in actor rape case gets extension

Lankesh in June.

STAFF REPORTER

said on Monday.

The accused in the murder

of third year engineering

student Nallapu Ramya tried

to kill himself with a blade

after committing the crime,

the Guntur Urban police

who was arrested on Sun-

day, stabbed the woman to

death after an altercation

near her house. Police said

the accused met Ramya on

social media two months

ago and befriended her. The

accused had been harassing

Kunchala Sasikrishna, 19,

The Supreme Court on Monday gave an additional special sessions court in Kochi a six-month extension to complete the trial in a sexual assault case involving Malayalam actor Dileep. The second wave of the pandemic had affected the pace of the

Will supply vaccines to Kerala: Centre

Union Health Minister reviews situation in State with CM, calls for precautions during Onam festivities

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Monday asked the Kerala government to take all necessary precautions to ensure that the upcoming Onam festivities do not lead to another surge in COVID-19 cases and worsen the current situation.

He gave Kerala the assurance that the Centre would provide an adequate supply of vaccines as demanded by the State.

Mr. Mandaviya, who was on a visit to the State to assess the COVID-19 situation, held discussions with Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, Health Minister Veena George and a team of senior Health officials bureaucrats.

₹1 cr. each for districts

Accused in student's murder

tried to kill himself: A.P. police

Sasikrishna stabbed her to death after altercation, say police

Sasikrishna has been

booked under Section 302 of

the IPC and Section 3 (2) of

the Scheduled Caste and

Scheduled Tribe (Prevention

of Atrocities) Act. The Disha

police are investigating the

Police presented the ac-

cused before the media on

Monday. The accused was

taken into custody at Narsa-

raopet. He tried to kill him-

self with a blade, and the

police sent him to the Go-

vernment Hospital. The

weapon used by the accused

"The accused met Ramya

has been seized.

The Centre would allocate ₹1 crore each to all districts in the State as part of the Emer-



Taking stock: Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and Health Minister Veena George explaining the containment measures adopted by the State to a Central team.

tricts, with 10 kl liquid oxy-

gency COVID Response Package-II for creating a medical

This allocation was in addition to the ₹267.35 crore already allocated to the State for COVID containment activities and for strengthening

on Instagram two months

ago and befriended her. Sa-

sikrishna had been harass-

ing her. On Sunday, the ac-

cused went to the house of

Ramya and both drove away.

In an hour, Sasikrishna

dropped Ramya near her

house and both had an alter-

cation. In a fit of rage, Sasik-

rishna allegedly stabbed Ra-

mya on her throat, chest and

on the thighs. CCTV cameras

captured the crime," Deputy

Inspector General (Guntur)

S.V. Rajasekhara Babu told

the media. A woman tried to

intervene, but the accused

setting up a Centre of Excelthe health system infrastructure, Mr. Mandaviya added. lence for Telemedicine Facil-He directed that paediaities in all districts in the

tric ICUs be set up in all dis-State. Mr. Vijayan, in a Facebook gen tank facility. The post later, said the State's CO-Minister said the Centre VID containment strategies, would support the State in including its consistent testing, home quarantine and its achievements in the area of vaccination, had been deemed satisfactory by Mr. Mandaviya and the team of senior officials with him, including Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan.

Mr. Vijayan said the State's low case fatality rate, high vaccination coverage and zero vaccine wastage had come in for appreciation at the

Vaccine doses

Mr. Mandaviya promised to take the necessary steps to allocate 1.1 crore doses of vaccine in August-September, as demanded by Kerala, the Chief Minister said.

Mr. Mandaviya later called on Governor Arif Mohammed Khan at the Raj Bhavan.

He also visited the HLL Lifecare office at Poojappura and the Government Medical College Hospital here.

Probe on into abduction of Gulf returnee at Koyilandy

The alleged carrier of smuggled gold was freed later

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Kozhikode rural police have launched a probe into a complaint that a Gulf returnee of Muthambi village, near Koyilandy, was abducted at gunpoint by a fourmember gang at 11.30 p.m. on Sunday.

The incident came to light after the abductee, Haneefa Thoniyadatu, 33, was released on Monday with injuries. He has been admitted to a private hospital.

Police said Mr. Thoniyadatu, suspected to be a carrier of smuggled gold, had returned from Qatar three months ago.

He told the smuggling gang that Customs officials had confiscated the contraband of 650 g when he arrived at the Calicut international airport. He also allegedly produced a forged Customs certificate to convince the gang.

However, the gang reportedly refused to believe him and enquired about the seizure at the airport.

On Sunday, they waylaid Mr. Thoniyadatu, who was returning home on a motorbike on Kavumvattu Road.

Based on a compliant filed by his brother Ali, the Koyilandy police have registered a case.

Last month, an expatriate, Ashraf Ahammed, who returned home from Saudi Arabia, was kidnapped at gunpoint in Koyilandy by a gang suspected to be linked to gold smuggling.

Mr. Ahammed was abandoned by the gang at Kunnamangalam after being tor-He had told tured. investigators that a Kannurbased gang had taken away the smuggled gold.



Forecast for Tuesday: Heavy/very heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Assam, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Odisha, central Maharashtra, Konkan & Goa, Telangana, coastal Andhra Pradesh and north interior Karnataka. Thunderstorm with lightning likely at isolated places over east Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Marathawada and Yanam

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MII
Agartala	0.7	32.7	27.3	Kozhikode	3.4	30.2	24.4
Ahmedabad		36.0	26.1	Kurnool	2.5	29.0	23.
Aizawl	13	–	22.3	Lucknow		36.9	27.
Allahabad		38.1	28.0	Madurai		37.6	25.
Bengaluru		26.5	20.5	Mangaluru	6.5	28.8	23.
Bhopal		32.6	23.0	Mumbai	30.5	28.1	23.
Bhubaneswar	8.4	32.6	26.8	Mysuru		28.8	21.
Chandigarh	6.8	35.7	24.0	New Delhi		37.4	27.
Chennai	0.6	32.8	27.3	Patna		35.0	27.
Coimbatore		31.4	22.6	Port Blair	55	28.5	22.0
Dehradun	0.6	33.4	22.3	Puducherry		32.2	24.0
Gangtok	0.3	22.2	17.8	Pune	0.2	27.4	21.
Goa	14	27.5	23.8	Raipur	19.6	32.8	26.
Guwahati		33.0	26.9	Ranchi	5	30.7	23.0
Hubballi		26.0	21.0	Shillong		24.8	17.2
Hyderabad	3	26.4	21.8	Shimla	3	25.3	15.9
Imphal		28.6	23.1	Srinagar	12	27.0	12.
Jaipur		36.0	26.0	Thiruvananthapuram.		32.3	24.
Kochi	2	28.6	24.2	Tiruchi		35.1	26.
Kohima	3	26.0	17.4	Vijayawada	49	29.2	25.0
Kolkata		32.9	28.8	Visakhapatnam	2.7	32.4	27.
(Rainfall data i	in mm·	tomnor	atura in	Calsius)			

...62 ...50 .39 ..173 .225 .3521 ...33

4.00 p.m., Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh recorded ar

Air Quality Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI) 502: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air

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

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

particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues

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

COVID-19: Maharashtra sees 4,145 cases; active tally stands at 62,452

5,811 patients discharged from hospitals across State; 100 more succumb to virus

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Maharashtra reported 4,145 new COVID-19 cases and 100 fatalities on Monday, taking infection tally to 63,96,805 and the death toll to 1,35,139, a State Health Department official said.

Notably, Nandurbar district in North Maharashtra does not have a single active case of novel coronavirus currently, making it free of the infection for now.

The official said 5,811 patients were discharged from hospitals across the State in the last 24 hours, taking the cumulative number of recovered cases to 61,95,744.

Maharashtra now has 62,452 active cases. The State has 3,53,129 people in home quarantine and

2,530 in institutional qua-

rantine, according to the offi-



People queue up outside a vaccination centre at Poddar hospital in Worli, Mumbai, on Monday. • EMMANUAL YOGINI

cial. Maharashtra's COVID-19 recovery rate now stands at 96.86%, while the fatality rate is 2.11%.

The cumulative number of tests conducted in the State climbed to 5,11,11,895, of which 1,52,165 tests were done in the last 24 hours.

Dhule, Nandurbar, Jalna, Parbhani, Akola and Wardha districts and Dhule, Jalgaon, Bhiwandi Nizampur, Parbhani, Nanded, Amaravati, and Chandrapur municipal corporations did not report any new coronavirus infections

in the last 24 hours, he said.

Ahmednagar district reported the highest new infections at 660 followed by Solapur at 584, while Aurangabad topped the list of fatalities with 36 deaths in the last 24 hours. Among the eight regions of Maharashtra, the Pune region recorded the highest new cases at 1,799 followed by 600 cases in the Kolhapur region.

Among the other regions, Nashik reported 769 cases, Mumbai 465, Latur 169, Akola 21, while Aurangabad and Nagpur regions registered 11 infections each, the official

Out of the 100 fatalities, the highest 46 were reported from the Aurangabad region, followed by 19 from the Kolhapur region.

The official said Mumbai witnessed 195 new COVID-19 cases and three deaths, while Pune city reported 148 infections, but no fresh death. Among the 62,452 active cases in the State, Pune district has the highest at

Greetings and wishes



Special day: Parsis greet each other outside a community hall after offering prayers on the occasion of Parsi New Year in Mumbai on Monday. • EMMANUAL YOGINI

BJP Ministers begin Jan Ashirwad Yatra

State govt. flayed for complaining about lack of vaccine supply

STAFF REPORTER

Newly inducted Union Ministers of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Monday kick-started Jan Ashirwad Yatra with Union Minister of State for Health Dr. Bharati Pawar slamming the State government for complaining over lack of supply of CO-VID-19 vaccines. "Maharashtra received

the highest number of CO-VID-19 vaccines from the Central government. Despite that the State government keeps on complaining about lack of supply of vaccines," Ms. Pawar said, while commencing her part of the yatra from the tribal area of

Palghar district.

With the yatra, Ms. Pawar said she intends to spread awareness of vaccination in rural areas of the State and understand the problems. "We want to ensure that everyone gets the benefits of health services. I am travelling to find out if the Centre's schemes are reaching the villages or not. I will make district officials answerable if I see lacunae in health ser-

Along with Ms. Pawar, Union Minister of State for Panchayati Raj Kapil Patil, Union Minister of State for Finance Dr. Bhagwat Karad too began the yatra from their respective routes. Mr. Patil will

travel 570 km in Thane and Raigad districts and Mr. Kawill travel 623 km through the seven Lok Sabha constituencies in Marath-

A disgruntled Pankaja Munde on Monday joined Mr. Karad during his tour in Beed district, which is the home turf of the former. At one point, Ms. Munde lost her temper over the sloganeering of BJP workers who shouted, 'Pankaja Munde Aamdar, baki sab angarbhangar.' "Have I taught you such level of sloganeering? Stop this right now. What kind of slogan is this? Change the slogan to Gopinath Munde amar rahe," she said.

Duo who fled with gold after killing 60-year-old man held

NAVI MUMBAI

plice have been arrested for allegedly killing a 60-year-old man in Panvel and fleeing with his gold jewellery weighing 170 grams.

Balaram Chander Patil and Nanda Thakur (42), both residents of Ovale village in Panvel, were known to each other. Patil used to visit the house of Ms. Thakur who had an eye on the jewellery

visited her, Ms. Thakur called her accomplice, Mangesh Khetri (32), who worked as a driver. The duo then tied up Patil on a chair and put chilli

fore strangling him to death. The duo removed the gold jewellery from him and fled.

body was found in Ms. Tha-Sunday morning received inrevealed that the stolen boohad fled to Buldhana

"A team was dispatched to Buldhana where Mr. Khetri was arrested, and the gold jewellery was recovered," senior police inspector Ajay Landge from Panvel City police station said.

Over half kg hair removed from girl's stomach

She had been pulling out and eating her hair since she was toddler

RAINA ASSAINAR

A woman and her accom-

On Saturday, when Patil

powder into his nostrils be-Patil's son approached the

Panvel City police, and the kur's house. The police on formation that Ms. Thakur was at a bus stop in Kalamboli, and she was nabbed. She ty was with Mr. Khetri who

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT pital, Kalyan (East), where Doctors at a hospital in Ka-

lyan in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) removed 650 grams of hair that had accumulated in a 12year-old girl's stomach.

The girl had been pulling out and eating her own hair since she was a toddler and over the years this had turned into a large ball making her sick and causing intense pain in the stomach.

This condition is seen in people with psychological disorder Trichophagia - a compulsive urge to eat hair – said Rohit Paryani, general & laparoscopic surgeon from Starcity Multispeciality Hos-

procedure conducted. "The parents said she

started eating hair from the age of two. Initially they didn't take it seriously until her stomach was so tightly packed with the hair that she was unable to eat normal food, had pain and recurrent vomiting causing significant weight loss," said Dr.

Paryani. "Her weight is only 20 kg which is less than half the normal weight for her age. CT scan revealed that the whole stomach was filled with tightly packed hair," he said.

Surgeons ruled out minimally invasive laparoscopic

feared locks of hair may entangle in the instrument used for the procedure making the situation worse.

surgeries because they

"Two days ago we conducted open surgery and pulled out the hair which weighed about 650gm and occupied all of the space in the stomach. That explains why she is malnourished and hasn't been having a good appetite," Dr. Paryani said.

A small amount of hair ingested accidentally generally comes out of the body, but when there is constant ingestion, the hair settles in the stomach causing trichobezoars (hair in the stomach).

Fall of Kabul

With Afghanistan under the total control of the Taliban, the future looks bleak

Tistory came full circle on August 15 when the Taliban captured Kabul, almost 20 years after the LU.S. launched its global war on terror. The city of roughly 5 million people fell to the Islamist insurgents without even a fight while Afghan President Ashraf Ghani fled the country, and the Americans abandoned their Embassy and rushed to Kabul airport. It was a surreal moment for the U.S., which had pledged to defeat the Taliban in every corner of Afghanistan, and a tragedy for the Afghans, who were left at the mercy of a murderous militia. The soldiers did not fight. Police abandoned their stations. Former Northern Alliance warlords left the country. And the government crumbled like the proverbial house of cards. There is already worrying news coming from the provinces that the Taliban are enforcing a strict religious code on the public and violence against anyone who resists. The last time the Taliban were in power, women were not allowed to work. They had to cover their faces and be accompanied by a male relative outside their homes. Girls were not allowed to go to school. The Taliban had also banned TV, music, painting and photography, handed out brutal forms of punishment to those violating their Islamic code, and persecuted minorities. The chaotic scenes from Kabul airport, where people are desperately trying to cling on to airplanes hoping to leave the country, bear testimony to their fear of the Taliban.

This is a historic development that will have lasting implications for global geopolitics. Unlike 1996, this is not only about the Taliban taking power. This is also about an Islamist group with a medieval mindset and modern weapons defeating the world's most powerful country. The U.S. can say in its defence that its mission was to fight al-Qaeda and that it met its strategic objectives. But in reality, after spending 20 years in Afghanistan to fight terrorism and rebuild the Afghan state, the U.S. ran away from the battlefield, embarrassing itself and leaving its allies helpless. The images from Arg, the presidential palace in Kabul, and the airport will continue to haunt President Joe Biden and the U.S. for a long time. In 1996, when the Taliban took Kabul, the government did not flee the country. Ahmad Shah Massoud and Burhanuddin Rabbani retreated to the Panjshir valley from where they regrouped the Northern Alliance and continued resistance against the Taliban. This time, there is no Northern Alliance. There is no government. The whole country, except some pockets, is now firmly under the Taliban's control. The Taliban are also more receptive to regional players such as China and Russia, while Pakistan is openly celebrating their triumph. It remains to be seen what kind of a regime a stronger Taliban will install in Kabul. If the 1990s are anything to go by, darker days are ahead in Afghanistan.

Beating plastic pollution

Serious implementation of new plastic waste rules can address the problem of waste

The Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules notified by the Centre on August 12 acknowledge the gravity of pollution caused by plastic articles of everyday use, particularly those that have no utility beyond a few minutes or hours. Under the new rules, the manufacture, sale and use of some single-use goods made with plastic, polystyrene, and expanded polystyrene, such as earbuds, plates, cups, glasses, cutlery, wrapping and packing films, are prohibited from July 1 next year, while others such as carry bags must be at least 75 microns thick from September 30, 2021, and 120 microns from December 31 next year, compared to 50 microns at present. The decisions follow recommendations made by an expert group constituted by the Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals two years ago. In 2018, India won praise globally for asserting on World Environment Day that it would eliminate all single-use plastic by 2022, a theme that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has stressed more than once. Yet, policy coherence to achieve the goal has been lacking. The Central Pollution Control Board has reported that 22 States have, in the past, announced a ban on single-use plastic, but this has had little impact on the crisis of waste choking wetlands and waterways and being transported to the oceans to turn into microplastic.

At about 34 lakh tonnes generated in 2019-20, India has a staggering annual volume of plastic waste, of which only about 60% is recycled. What is more, a recent study of the top 100 global producers of polymers that culminate in plastic waste found six of them based in India. It is unsurprising, therefore, that in spite of the staggering problem, policymakers have been treading on eggshells. The international view is changing, however, and support for a UN Plastic Treaty is growing; the majority of G7 countries too are supportive of cleaning up the oceans through a charter in the interests of human wellbeing and environmental integrity. India's policies on environmental regulation are discordant, lofty on intent but feeble on outcomes, and plastic waste is no different. State governments have felt no compulsion to replace municipal contracts, where companies are paid for haulage of mixed waste, with terms that require segregation and accounting of materials. Considerable amounts of plastic waste cannot be recycled because of lack of segregation, leading to incineration, while mixing newer types of compostable plastic will confound the problem. Patchy regulation has led to prohibited plastic moving across State borders. Now that the Centre has adopted a broad ban, further pollution must end. Microplastic is already found in the food chain, and governments must act responsibly to stop the scourge.

The message from the IPCC report

Equitable cumulative emission targets and not net zero is the key to achieving the Paris Agreement's temperature goals



& TEJAL KANITKAR

The recent report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the Working Group I contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report (AR6), titled 'Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis', is the first of four that the Panel will issue over the next one and a half years. The reports are eagerly awaited as they provide a summary assessment of all aspects of the challenge of global warming and past reports have heralded significant shifts in climate policy. This particular report has added significance as it is the only one of the four of AR6 to be ready before the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP26) of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change to be held in Glasgow in November.

Findings of the report

A significant section of the report reinforces what is already well known, though, importantly, with updated numbers, higher accuracy and specific regional assessments, including South Asia. Global surface temperature is now higher by 1.07°C since the pre-industrial era. The impact of climate change on the atmosphere, oceans and land is unmistakably of human origin and this impact is picking up pace. It is a striking fact that there is no part of the inhabited world that is now untouched by the impact of global warming. Carbon dioxide is the dominant source of warming. Aerosols con-

tribute to reducing the impact of warming by other greenhouse gases, by almost a third. Methane reduction, while needed overall, is particularly significant only as part of the endgame as the drastic reduction of aerosols actually leads to an increase in warming.

A major scientific advance in this report is the use of multiple lines of evidence (through precise technical methods) to pin down the values and trends of key climatic variables more accurately, and narrow their range of uncertainties. Climate predictions from models appear to be working better in many specific ways due to improved representation of basic processes and higher resolution, while the use of other evidence enables scientists to ensure that the modelling output is suitably filtered to match more closely the real world. Thus, the value of equilibrium climate sensitivity - the measure of how a specified increase in carbon dioxide concentration translates into long-term surface temperature rise – is now pinned down to the range of 2.5°C to 4.0°C, with a best estimate of 3°C, compared to the Fifth Assessment Report range of 1.5°C to 4.5°C. With the inclusion of the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology's Earth System Model among the climate models used in AR6, India too has joined the climate modelling fraternity.

The report expectedly projects an increase in climate extremes due to global warming, with heat waves, extreme rainfall events and occurrence of extreme sea levels all expected to intensify and be more frequent. Coincidentally, the IPCC session for the approval and release of the report was held in the background of news of unprecedented disasters from the global

North, including massive forest fires, unprecedented rain and flooding, and record heat.

Restrict cumulative emissions A major finding of the report is that air pollution reduction and steep climate change mitigation are not complementary goals but require independent efforts over the short and medium term. This is particularly important as the claims of such a linkage have been used to argue that India, for instance, must cease the use of coal immediately, despite its continuing importance as the key element of the country's energy security.

The truly disconcerting news though, for the global North, is the report's clear message that reaching net zero was not the determining factor for the world to limit itself to a 1.5°C, or 2°C, or indeed any specific temperature increase. The report is clear that it is the cumulative emissions in reaching net zero that determine the temperature rise. This obvious conclusion from past reports and scientifliterature had become something of a casualty in the massive campaign mounted on net zero by the developed countries with the partisan support of the United Nations Secretary General and UN agencies.

India's Ministry for Environment, Forest and Climate Change was quick to note this point about net zero in a statement, adding that "historical cumulative emis-

sions are the cause of the climate crisis that the world faces today." It also noted that the "developed countries had usurped far more than their fair share of the global carbon budget." The limitations of the remaining carbon budget for 1.5°C are so stringent – a mere 500 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide for an even chance of keeping to the limit – that they cannot be met by promises of net zero 30 years from now. The report is indeed a "clarion call for developed countries to undertake immediate, deep emission cuts," as the Union Environment Minister, Bhupender Yadav, tweeted, especially if they are not to deprive the rest of the world, barring China, of any hope of future development. Developed countries must, in fact, reach net zero well before 2050. That Alok Sarma, the COP26 President, is not unaware of all this is seen from the shift in his discourse, appealing to "keep 1.5°C alive".

Little cheer for Global South

However, the exposure of the misleading character of the net zero campaign can bring little cheer to the global South, for an equally disconcerting finding is that the world is set to cross the 1.5°C limit within 10-15 years. If deep emissions cuts by the three big emitters – the U.S., the European Union and China – are not forthcoming, even the prospect of a mild overshoot of the limit followed by a later decline is likely to be foregone. After years of procrastination in real action, the constant shifting of goal posts to avoid immediate emissions reduction, and marking time with their obsession with Article 6 negotiations to pass the burden on to developing countries, the developed countries now have

Regrettably, India cannot save the world from the consequences of the neglect of those whose responsibility it was to lead in taking credible action. India has contributed less than 5% of global cumulative emissions to date, with per capita annual emissions a third of the global average. India is also the only nation among the G20 with commitments under the Paris Agreement that are even 2°C warming-compatible. India needs its development space urgently to cope with the future, one where global temperature increase may be closer to 2°C. With India's annual emissions at 3 billion tonnes in carbon dioxide equivalent terms, even the impossible, such as the total cessation of emissions for the next 30 years, with others' emissions remaining the same, will buy the world less than two years of additional time for meeting the Paris Agreement temperature goals. The prospect of keeping almost a sixth of humanity in quasi-permanent deprivation for the rest of the century as a conseeven quence cannot contemplated.

Focusing on definite cumulative emission targets keeping equity and historical responsibility in view, immediate emission reductions by the developed countries with phase-out dates for all fossil fuels, massive investment in new technologies and their deployment, and a serious push to the mobilisation of adequate climate finance is the need of the hour. This is the message that the IPCC report has sent to this year's climate summit and the world.

T. Jayaraman is with the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, Chennai and Tejal Kanitkar is with the National Institute of

Decoding the Tamil Nadu Budget

The focus at a time like this should be on shoring up demand and enhancing people's purchasing power



KALAIYARASAN A.

Expectations from the revised Budget for 2021-22 presented by the Tamil Nadu government were high since this is the Dravida Munnetra Kaznagam (DNK) government's first Budget after 10 years of being out of power. The Budget needed to stand out and reflect the ideological commitment of Dravidian politics. But did it succeed? Perhaps, but not in all respects. It could have addressed the pandemic-induced economic crisis more directly, which is important since Tamil Nadu's economy has seen a decade of stagnation, slipping in its unique trajectory of high growth and relatively equitable development.

In the run-up to this Budget, State Finance Minister P.T.R. Palanivel Thiagarajan released a white paper, a comprehensive analysis of the State's financial status and its economic condition. While the white paper offered a diagnosis of the ailing economy, the revised Budget was to provide prescriptions to revive the economy.

As is by now well acknowledged, the pandemic has affected the urban poor, informal workers, and small businesses disproportionately, leading to declining wages and job losses. Tamil Nadu has been particularly badly hit by the pandemic. A study by Azim Premji University suggests that Tamil Nadu was among the worst-hit States in terms of the lockdown-induced economic distress leading to disproportionate job losses.

Let's first look at the positive aspects. The Budget has made allocations for many promises made in the DMK's election manifesto. This is laudable. The reduction in the effective rate of tax on petrol by ₹3 per litre is certainly a relief to many. Similarly, schemes such as nine new SIPCOT parks in industrially dackward areas and the establishment of Tidel Parks in Tier-II and Tier-III towns are welcome steps in building industrial infrastructure across the State. So are measures such as strengthening public education. The Budget promises to improve the quality of teaching in government schools as enrolment in government schools fell from 76% of the total student population in 2012 to 53% in 2020. Learning outcomes, it says, will be accorded the highest priority.

Following the DMK's historical legacy of federal assertion, the Budget's proposal of establishing an advisory council to develop a Federal Fiscal Model, ostensibly to propose a new road map on revenue and taxation, including the Goods and Services Tax, again is

Economic recovery

However, the Budget's prescriptions fall short of what the diagnosis in the white paper requires, particularly with respect to revenue mobilisation. The proposed property taxes mentioned in the white paper are missing in the Budget document.

Besides the nitty-gritty of num-



pers, what is important is to offer a robust path for the economy to recover. As the white paper has shown, the State's fiscal position is poor, particularly with rising revenue deficits and unsustainable public debt coupled with falling expenditure which has affected productive investment and the development sectors. The share of development expenditure in total disbursal was 62.9% in 2011-12 as against all States average of 63.1%. This came down to 57.5% in 2018-19 which was substantially below the all-States average of 62.9%.

The ability of government intervention in any economy lies in its fiscal capacity, the size of government, measured by its ratio of revenue/ tax to the GSDP. The ratio of total revenue receipts to the GSDP has been declining. It was 12.49% in 2006, peaked at 13.35% in 2008-09, and came down to 8.7% in the year of pandemic. The most alarming figure is the falling tax GSDP ratio from 8.48% in 2006-07 to just 5.46% in 2020-21, a decline of 3.02 percentage points.

If we look at the disaggregated figures, the only receipt which has not come down during the period analysed in the white paper is tax

collection from TASMAC, a public sector network of liquor shops. It was 1.22% in 2006-07 and 1.40% in 2019-20. Such a trend is really disturbing given the fact that it is the poor who disproportionately contribute to such tax revenue.

Union aggression

While the State's ability to levy tax has come down, its revenue mobilisation was further hindered by Union government policies. One, the State was nit the most by the declining share in a divisible pool of Union taxes, particularly after switching to the 2011 Census base from the 1971 Census by the 14th and 15th Finance Commissions. Its shares in the divisible pool came down from 6.6% during the 10th Finance Commission to 4.02% during the 15th Finance Commission. To put it differently, the State is paying a penalty for controlling its population growth.

Two, with the arrival of GST, not only has the State lost its ability to generate revenue, but is also losing revenue from other sources. For instance, the Union government has imposed a cess on petrol and diesel which are not shared with the State governments.

There are some sectors which ought to have received immediate attention. The Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), a key sector in the State's inclusive growth trajectory, are in trouble now. Given their degree of informality as well as demand and supply constraints, MSMEs suffered the most during the lockdown while the companies listed in the stock market are doing relatively better. Many of them were charged

the same rate of interest even during the pandemic. While the Budget mentions a tripartite agreement between MSMEs and their creditors to reach an agreement on restructuring loans, there is no comprehensive package for them.

Similarly, the Tamil Nadu government was appreciated for its proactive measures during the second wave of the pandemic, including its COVID-19 assistance package to ration card holders, but the Budget does not have any specific programmes for the informal workers and urban poor. On August 3, 2021, a parliamentary standing committee recommended the institution of an urban employment scheme at the national level. While a similar scheme had a passing mention in the Budget, Tamil Nadu could have set a model by instituting one. Labour Welfare Boards for informal workers are in a shambles. Revitalising these boards would go a long way protecting informal workers.

Finally, fiscal deficits matter only as numbers. What matters most is the strategy of revenue mobilisation efforts and expenditure priorities. The excessive focus on fiscal deficits and public debts in the time of a pandemic is undesirable. Instead, the focus ought to be on shoring up demand and enhancing people's purchasing power. Experiences from the world over suggest that the path to recovery is well-timed stimulus. Tamil Nadu is no exception.

Kalaiyarasan A. is Assistant Professor at the Madras Institute of Development Studies and Research Affiliate at South Asia Institute, Harvard University

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.

Return of the Taliban The Taliban will likely

impose their medieval idea of governance in Afghanistan, with scant regard for human rights, freedom of speech, educational opportunities and freedom of work and leisure, especially for women ("Afghan President Ghani leaves country as Taliban reach Kabul", August 16). One can only hope that the new dispensation will recognise that it must allow citizens to exercise freedoms in order for it to gain more legitimacy in the eyes of the

taken over, we need to ask some hard questions. How were the insurgents able to hoodwink the American intelligence? From where do the Taliban get their stockpile of deadly weapons? How did they regroup, grow and launch so many successful operations? How did they escape aerial attacks? And how did they manage to overthrow the government so easily? The world needs answers from the U.S. administration. V. JOHAN DHANAKUMAR,

Now that the Taliban have

It is shocking that the UNSC, the international

community's principal organ for peacekeeping, did not convene to discuss the Afghan crisis as it was unfolding and chose to meet only on Monday once the U.S. had left Afghanistan and the Taliban had taken over. Whose interests does that serve? It is time for a complete restructuring and reform of the UNSC. RATNARAJ JAIN, Rajahmundry **Scientific temper**

The scholarly articles of the I-Day special were insightful. I particularly wish to highlight the piece "Scientific temper as key" by Dr. Gagandeep Kang. It

was bold and exceptional for a country with so many traditions, conventions and social taboos to have adopted a Scientific Policy Resolution as early as 1958. Indeed, the first quarter of independent India saw many concrete steps taken in the direction of developing a scientific temper. However, the state policies followed in the last few years give the impression that questioning, which is the essential tenet of scientific temper, is unwelcome, and seem to promote a line of thought which accepts primeval theories and beliefs as final truths. In

in promoting projects to explore those "facts". While there is some merit in testing the views and beliefs of centuries through modern means, the problem arises when it is done more to prove them rather than to test their validity. By asking whether we can thrive as a society

without scientific temper, Dr. Kang has expressed a

concern that we can

ill-afford to neglect.

RAJIVA RAMAN,

MORE LETTERS ONLINE:

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS: In an Open page article titled "Grace, gratitude and humanism" (August 15, 2021), there was an erroneous reference, in the context of men's high jump at the Tokyo Olympics, to Italian athlete Gianmarco Tamberi getting injured and not attempting another jump. Actually, Tamberi had a history of injuries before coming to the event. He was not hurt dur

ing the event. It is the policy of The Hindu to correct significant errors as soon as possible. Please specify the edition (place of publication), date and page. The Readers' Editor's office can be contacted by Telephone: +91-44-28418297/28576300 (11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday to Friday); Fax: +91-44-28552963; E-mail:readerseditor@thehindu.co.in; Mail: Readers Filed, y, Tox. -81-44-263526, E-filed, Educate Seutonium lenningucini, Mair. Readers Editor, The Hindu, Kasturi Buildings, 859 & 860 Anna Salai, Chennai 600 002, India. All communication must carry the full postal address and telephone number. No persona

A. MOHAN,

fact, much money is spent

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U.S.-Pak. ties amid changes in Afghanistan The big opportunity

Pakistan's nonchalance towards the Taliban undermines its attempts to reset relations with Washington



Pakistan's annoyance with U.S. President Joe Biden is understandable. Pakistan's National Security Adviser Moeed Yusuf could not hold back his frustration over Mr. Biden's apparent unwillingness to talk to Prime Minister Imran Khan. Mr. Yusuf even went to the extent of saying that Islamabad also had "options" if the U.S. believed that a Biden-Khan phone call was a "concession".

Regardless of the consequences that were entirely predictable, former U.S. President Donald Trump's administration signed an ill-conceived peace agreement with the Taliban in February 2020. Hypothetically, it was meant to pave the way for power-sharing negotiations between the Taliban and the Afghan government. But it practically ended up legitimising the former and marginalising the latter. Pakistan consistently claimed that it had played the most important role in persuading the Taliban to talk peace. But no progress was made in the talks due to the Taliban's determination to militarily capture Afghanistan.

Not without reason

The U.S.'s cold shoulder to Islamabad is, therefore, not without reason as whatever progress Afghanistan achieved over two decades is set to be reversed by the Taliban, Pakistan's most notorious proxy. With the Taliban's surprisingly swift entry into Kabul and the ignominious capitulation of Afghan institutions, politicians and militias, all grandiloquent talks of creating a stable, democratic and peaceful Afghanistan have vanished into thin air in the same way as the Afghan Army, which was trained and equipped by the U.S.

Though the Taliban has made tall promises to the U.S., China, Iran and Russia that it will not permit terrorists to operate from its territory, an unmistakable sense of jubilation over defeating the U.S. tempts the Islamist insurgents to dishonour such commitments and become more radical-



People trying to get to the Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul, Afghanistan on Monday. • REUTERS

Pakistan's official stand has been to prefer a politically negotiated outcome in Afghanistan, but even Pakistanis don't believe this farce. The country's recent attempts to distance itself from the Taliban, as manifested in Mr. Khan's public statement that Pakistan did not speak for the Taliban, will fall on deaf ears.

Notwithstanding Washington's huge disappointment over Pakistan's failure to convince the Taliban to discuss the terms of Afghanistan's governance, the Biden administration probably believes that Pakistan will continue to play a critical role in a Taliban-dominated Afghanistan, requiring Washington to communicate closely with Islamabad.

And despite many perceived humiliations and setbacks over the years, Pakistan's ruling elite still values its relationship with the U.S. In the immediate aftermath of American withdrawal, Pakistan is trying hard to reinvent its value to the U.S. Mr. Biden has not found time to talk to Mr. Khan even after more than six months in the White House. The Pakistani Prime Minister is not amused with the U.S. President, who has more than once interacted with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Though Mr. Yusuf has not disclosed his country's "other options", it is not too difficult to understand what he is referring to given the current geopolitical scenario. China is Pakistan's number one option – Beijing has been one of the strongest pillars of Pakistan's anti-India policies. Of late, Pakistan has attempted to draw closer to Turkey, supporting the latter's ambition to assume leadership of the Islamic world. Moreov-

er, Pakistan has taken steps to strengthen its ties with both Russia and Iran. But these relationships do not seem resilient enough for Pakistan to forge a stable regional security order because its effectiveness remains highly questionable.

Significant symbolism

Mr. Biden has not lost sleep over hurting Mr. Khan's inflated ego, and this probably makes Pakistan's security establishment somewhat restless. After all, Special Envoy Zalmay Khalilzad's multiple visits to Islamabad and Rawalpindi, coupled with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken's many telephonic talks with his Pakistani counterpart, Shah Mahmood Qureshi, can't be a replacement for a Biden-Khan conversation. For Pakistan's security establishment, the symbolism has been as significant as the substance in its relationship with

If the prestige of a country's rulers depends on the goodwill of another power, then the latter has the capacity to force the former to join hands with it. But Pakistan defies this conventional wisdom as its rulers have often disobeyed the wishes of the U.S, without having to suffer the consequences for such refusal. Pakistan's close ties with the U.S. during the Cold War era have often allowed it to punch above its military and economic weight. Nevertheless, tumultuous changes in the global geopolitical scenario and Pakistan's continued nonchalance toward the U.S.'s security concerns threaten Islamabad's attempts to reset ties with Washington.

Though Mr. Trump had publicly

expressed his frustrations over Pakistan's double-dealing in Afghanistan, Mr. Biden has preferred to remain largely silent thus far. However, this silence should not be interpreted as the U.S.'s eagerness to forget that its disgraceful defeat in Afghanistan had been facilitated by the Taliban's sanctuaries in Pakistan, a fact conveniently ignored by Mr. Khan while arguing that the U.S. "messed it up in

Afghanistan".

Despite public denial by the Pakistani Prime Minister that his country would not allow American bases in Pakistan for intelligence-led operations inside Afghanistan, there are reports that the U.S. has not given up its efforts to seek bases in Pakistan. But the problem is that in Pakistan's popular discourse, sustained by media and politicians, the anti-drone narrative questioning the Pakistani establishment's collusion with the U.S. has become so entrenched that American bases seem highly improbable, if not impossible. That is why Mr. Yusuf has been forced to deny any discussion over bases in talks with his American counterpart.

While no progressive Afghan can forgive the U.S. for pulling out its troops unconditionally without waiting for a negotiated political settlement, it seems unlikely that Mr. Biden will announce any kinetic initiative to reverse the Taliban's military victory. If Washington expects Islamabad to use its influence over the Taliban's state policies and also provide counterterrorism cooperation in the post-withdrawal landscape, these hopes are patently unrealistic because Pakistan has become accustomed to being verbally condemned against its multidimensional support to the Taliban without suffering any serious damage to its material interests. And if the inexorable circumstances put pressure on the Biden administration to outsource Afghanistan to Pakistan, it will have ramifications over New Delhi's enthusiasm in firming up the India-U.S.-Australia-Japan Quadrilateral, an outcome the U.S. cannot afford at the moment.

Vinay Kaura is Assistant Professor, Department of International Affairs and Security Studies, Sardar Patel University of Police, Security and Criminal Justice, Jodhpur, Rajasthan. He is also a non-resident

were passed in the LS after debates

spanning 10 minutes or less

■ In the 15th LS

session, 71% of Bills

were referred to a

12% were referred

in the 17th LS

400

The

committee and only

A rising youth population in India can be a silver lining



DAMINI CHOPRA

According to various international studies, the median age in India would be 28 years by 2022-23, in contrast to 37 in China and 45 in western Europe. This is not an ageist remark, but rather an enormous growth opportunity as India will have the highest number of people in the workforce. In other words, India's non-working population would be outnumbered by the working population, leading to a favourable demographic dividend.

Given the changing face of world economies over the past two years, it is important to juxtapose these statistics with the predicted challenges of a post-COVID world. As per an Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) study, the equivalent of five years or more of per capita income would likely be lost by the end of 2021.

The World Bank notes that we would be witnessing deep global recessions fuelled by lowered investments, displacement of human capital owing to lost jobs and schooling, and a disintegration of global trade and supply chains.

Effects of climate change

In addition to this, increased use of non-degradable plastics, bio-medical waste and impediments to ongoing climate repair programmes have further exacerbated climate change deterioration. The effects of an increased use of plastics during the pandemic (which would end up in oceans or landfills) would cost fisheries, tourism and maritime transport industries an additional \$40 billion, according to a UN Environment Pro-

Hence, COVID-19 is an ongoing challenge that is further aggravating bigger concerns like economic recession and climate change. For most countries, these two predicaments would be bigger than the pandemic.

Despite the gloomy outlook, there is a silver lining for India. Let us circle back to the demographic dividend or the economic growth brought on by a change in the structure of a country's population. This leads to an increase in the labour force and, in turn, more people are working and being productive. This accelerates urbanisation and the growth of industries. Also, as the purchasing power of the populace increases, it opens up a bigger domestic market (which is already sizeable in the case of India), thus attracting

more investment and increasing opportunities. Taking these factors into account, the Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR) predicts that despite the pandemic, India will become the third largest economy in the world by 2030. Deutsche Bank cements this forecast with their own findings that India's economy will grow to \$7 trillion by 2030 (it is about \$2 trillion now).

The younger the population the more climate-conscious they are. This can simply be explained by younger generations seeing the real-time impact of climate change - from increasing natural disasters to lessening natural resources. This makes them more inclined to act towards a greener tomorrow. A UN report on climate change tells us that close to half a million youth around the world have taken (or are taking) action against climate change through initiatives at their homes, schools and communities.

A decisive 'Future of Work' survey conducted by the Prince's Trust and HSBC claims that 85% of India's youth are interested in a green job as they believe that healing the environment is the only sustainable way forward. When we corroborate this with India's performance on climate change mitigation (one of the top 10 countries to have made substantial efforts towards mitigating climate change), we can fully understand the clout of a younger demographic. The Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI), 2021, puts only two G20 (or Group of Twenty) countries - India and U.K. - in the top 10.

India is often at the forefront of bringing about change. But to continue unhindered on the path of reaping the benefits of the demographic dividend, efforts will have to be made. Inequality is a pressing issue. CO-VID-19 and the subsequent lockdowns have further deepened this divide. While the Union government has rolled out various subsidies and employment schemes, dominance of the informal economy makes it difficult for all benefactors to reap the benefits.

The need of the hour is for public-private partnership (PPP) models to work in conjunction to bridge the gap. Education and skilling are also key components in enhancing the capabilities of the growing young population and helping them realize their full potential. Moreover, labour-intensive sectors need to be better supported for further job creation.

The rising young population provides India with a great opportunity for growth. To be able to best utilise this boom, policies must ensure that they comprehensively cover all aspects aimed at increasing human development and standards of living.

The author is an actor and is also associated with global NGOs such as the Robin Hood Army

Case for third party funding

Such funding can improve access to justice

SIDHARTH KAPOOR

Third party funding in arbitration, or litigation funding, is a concept where an unrelated party to a dispute finances the legal cost of one of the parties. The speculative investor receives part of the damages owed or recovered by the financed party in exchange for the funding. This form of funding is widely used in commercial arbitration and various litigations around the world. It is believed that this form of financing improves access to justice by providing advance funding and support against a lengthy and expensive litigation process.

Historically, this form of funding was prohibited under the doctrines of maintenance and champerty. Maintenance deals with assistance to maintain litigation by an unconnected third party by providing finance. Champerty, a form of maintenance, refers to paying litigation costs by a third party for the objective of attaining a share of the proceeds of litigation. The need for such prohibition can be ascertained from its background. Feudal lords in medieval England would often trouble their enemies by financing frivolous lawsuits and thereby burdening courts.

Need of the hour

However, the current era seems to shrug off such concerns because the need of the hour is to increase our access to justice. Hence, rules against maintenance and champerty have been relaxed in various jurisdictions, including England, the U.S., Canada

In the context of India, interestingly, there was no bar on maintenance or champerty. However, many such arrangements where an advocate is a party are categorically precluded in view of Supreme Court decisions and the Bar Council of India rules. These arrangements would include ones where there is a personal interest of the advocate in the outcome of the dispute or agreements of contingencv fees. To sum it up, "non-lawver third party funding" is lawfully admissible in India.

Even in the context of advocates, there was the controversial 2019 decision given by the Bombay High Court in the Jayaswal Ashoka Infras-

tructures Pvt. Ltd. v Pansare Lawad case, where the court decided that a contingent fee agreement entered by an advocate to represent his client before an "arbitrator" was not void. Therefore, what flows is a difference in how law deals with an arrangement of contingency fees between an advocate and client before a court where it renders it impermissible, and an advocate and client before an arbitral tribunal where such an arrangement is valid. The readers must, however, be informed that the above mentioned decision has been appealed against.

Litigation risks

The practice of third party funding must become prevalent in India. This is not only because third party funding plays an instrumental role in opening access to the court system but also helps businesses manage their litigation risks in a better manner. This risk can be managed because the third party may conduct an additional analysis of the case.

However, while advocating for the enhancement of access to justice, we must also ensure that there are amendments. One of the most heated debates about third party financing in international arbitration is the disclosure of this kind of funding. We can take inspiration from the Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre's rules, the proposed changes in the International Bar Association rules and other such organisations, which stipulate that when a funding agreement is concluded, the funded party must notify the other party, the arbitral tribunal or emergency arbitrator in writing of the fact that a financing agreement has been concluded, along with the identity of the third party sponsor.

In order to streamline the process in India, we are seeing the advent of organisations such as the Indian Association for Litigation Finance.

Third party funding can definitely improve access to justice, but we must also ensure that scenarios like the ones that arose during the medieval period do not come up.

Sidharth Kapoor is an advocate in the Delhi High Court. Shreyashi is an advocate in the Iharkhand High Court

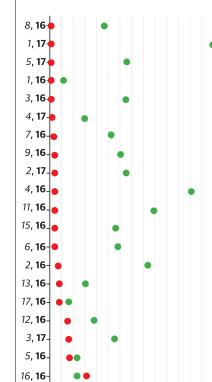
DATA POINT

Out of order

15 Bills were introduced and passed by Parliament in the same session, with a minimal amount of time spent on debating them. The Lok Sabha (LS) did not send any of the Bills to a select committee for further scrutiny, which has not been witnessed in any of the past 22 sessions. The latest LS session also recorded a very high number of disruptions. Over 74 hours were lost due to interruptions, the third-highest for any session since 2014. By Jasmin Nihalani, Vignesh Radhakrishnan and Sumant Sen

1. DISRUPTED SESSIONS

About 74.46 hours were lost to interruptions/forced adjournments during the latest monsoon session (6th session of the 17th LS) of the lower house, the third-highest since 2014. In only three of the past 23 LS sessions, the number of sitting hours • is fewer than the hours disrupted •, and the latest session is one among them. Each row represents a session. For instance, the first row corresponds to the 8th



HOURS -

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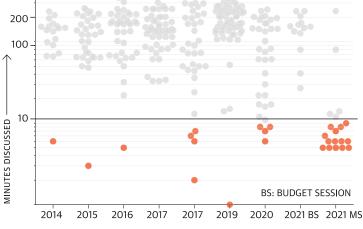
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data were sourced the PRS Legislative website and Lok Sabha 2. DISCUSSION TIME GOES DOWN

During the latest monsoon session (MS), as many as 14 Bills were passed by the LS after debating them for 10 minutes or less •. In the rest of the 22 sessions since 2014, only 12 such Bills were passed. The average time spent on discussing a Bill dropped from 213 minutes in 2019 to 85 minutes in 2021

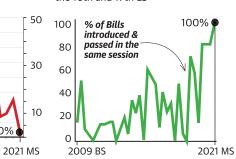


3. REFERRED TO COMMITTEE None of the 15 Bills introduced

and passed during the latest monsoon session were referred to a select committee, which is a new low. The share of Bills referred to committees have drastically decreased since 2014. About 60% and 71% of Bills were referred to committees in the 14th and 15th LS. This reduced to 27% and 12% in the 16th and 17th LS

4. PASSED IN SAME SESSION In the recent session, 15 new Bills

were introduced in Parliament and all of them were passed in the same session. The share of Bills introduced and passed in the same session has peaked at 100% in the latest session. About 18% of Bills were introduced and passed in the same session during the 15th LS. This increased to 33% and 70% in the 16th and 17th LS



The Man Prindu.

FROM THE ARCHIVES FIFTY YEARS AGO AUGUST 17, 1971

Calcutta murders

The Union Minister for West Bengal Affairs Mr. Siddhartha Shankar Ray, at a meeting of 26 political parties today, rejected the demand for an all-party probe into Thursday's mob frenzy at Cossipore and Baranagar in North Calcutta in which at least 50 persons are unofficially stated to have been killed. He also turned down a demand for an immediate suspension of the officers in charge of the two police stations. The parties had met yesterday and unanimously condemned the orgy and demanded "immediate action" against the police officers. At the end of the 90-minute meeting, representatives of different parties alleged that Mr. Ray had "gone back on his words" in rejecting their demands. Mr. Ray told newsmen that it had been decided that a retired High Court Judge would inquire into the incidents and submit a report in about a fortnight's time. He contended that a non-official body would not be able to bring out the truth as it would have no access to police records and officials had given conflicting reports. "According to Congress (R), 50 persons were killed, while C.P.M. put the toll at 70 and the C.P.I. at 60."

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO AUGUST 17, 1921

Britain's share of the reparations

The Prime Ministers of the Dominions met yesterday at the Colonial Office under the presidency of Mr. Churchill. In the morning, sitting as a Committee, they discussed the question of the status of the Indians in the Dominions, when, although there was good approach to it, complete unanimity was not arrived at. General Smuts was present in the morning and is understood to have joined in the discussion, which turned, in part on the position of South Africa in relation to Indian residents there. The Prime Ministers were agreed on the importance of encouraging wireless and air communications within the Empire, and on the duty of each Dominion to do its best in this matter. They will report in this sense to the Conference when it meets again as a whole. With regard to the question of reparations, there is reason to believe that agreement has been reached that the apportionment of the share received by the British Empire should be on the basis of the casualties pensions, expenditure, and losses of shipping by the various parts of the Empire. The total due to the British Empire is 22 per cent of £6,600,000,000, or 1,452,000,000.

FROM PAGE ONE

Snooping allegations mere conjecture: Centre

"We are dealing with a sensitive matter. Attempts are being made to make it sensa-Mr. Mehta complained.

"If the government is reluctant about filing a detailed affidavit, how can we compel them to?" the CJI turned to senior advocate Kapil Sibal. appearing for veteran journalists N. Ram and Sashi Kumar.

"Well, that would mean they don't want to admit or deny [to using Pegasus]... Then I can argue that they have not denied. Then the matter gets more serious... We want a straight answer. Did the government or any of its agencies use Pegasus? That question does not deal with national security," Mr. Sibal replied.

"Again, if the government has used Pegasus, did they use it through the Home Secretary. That again does not concern national security... So, let them file an affidavit," he added.

IT legislation hailed

The Solicitor General clarified that there was no reluctance of any kind on the part of the government. "The truth must come out," Mr. Mehta said. He referred to the Information Technology Act, which dealt with the regime of interceptions, monitoring, etc, of digital communications, as a "beautiful legislation". Mr. Mehta said the Act came into effect during the tenure of Mr. Sibal as

"Mr. Mehta, beauty over the years becomes no longer beautiful. It was once beautiful, but is no longer so the way you are using it," Mr. Sibal retorted.

At one point, Justice Aniruddha Bose, on the Bench, asked whether there was any material other than news reports to suggest 'violation' had taken place.

To this, Mr. Sibal said the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology had stated in the Lok Sabha in 2019 that social media messaging platform, WhatsApp, had informed the government about attempts to breach the mobile phones of 1,400 users globally, including 121 users in India, using

The court stood over the arguments in the case to Tuesday, while at the same time asking Mr. Mehta to mull over with officials the point of filing a detailed affidavit. The two-page affidavit, containing just about six paragraphs, was filed by an Additional Secretary in the MeitY. The official said he could not 'deal' with "all the facts and contentions" in the petitions due to "limited time", but he nevertheless went on to 'unequivocally' deny the allegations in them. He said a "bare perusal" of the peti-

submitted.

Afghans in India

"The Taliban would come to our homes and shops if we were not at the mosque for namaz and women were not allowed to go out of their homes. Even wearing jeans was considered a crime. My country is now finished,"

in Kabul who want to return to India. Ahmed Qasemi (name changed) is desperate to get back to finish his research work at the Central University, Kerala. "We now face an uncertain future and fear for our safety," he said. With the Indian Embassy shutting down, the students are waiting for a window to escape. Qasemi along with others returned to Afghanistan during the first of the

Omar Tariq, 22, at the Cochin University of Science and Technology, sits glued to his TV screen. Tariq is among the many Afghan students pursuing academic programmes in India as part of an initiative under the Indian Council for Cultural Re-

However, the Ministry affidavit, in its fifth paragraph,

tions revealed that they were

based on "conjectures, sur-

mises" drawn from "unsub-

stantiated media reports or

incomplete or uncorroborat-

ed material".

said the government would form a Committee of Experts to dispel the "wrong narrative" spread by "vested interests". Senior advocate Shyam Divan found the affidavit 'skimpy' while senior advo-Meenakshi "delightfully termed non-committal".

Sibal's rebuttals

Mr. Sibal rebutted the affidavit on five points. One, he said it was filed by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology and not the Ministry of Home Affairs which authorised surveillance under the law.

Secondly, the affidavit skips the part on whether the government or its agencies used Pegasus at all. Thirdly, he said if the government did not get the time to study the petitions and reply to them, then the court should give them the time. The court agreed to this view. Fourthly, the senior lawyer countered that the affidavit did not even say whether the "facts and contentions" in the petitions were right or wrong.

"Finally, and most importantly, we do not want a government who might have used Pegasus to form a Committee of Experts to inquire into the issue. As far as I am concerned, the issue is simple. If the government says they have used Pegasus, there is no need for a Committee. If the government says they have not used Pegasus, then too, there is no need for a Committee," Mr. Sibal said.

"For what purpose is this Committee?" the CJI asked.

Mr. Mehta said the offer to form a Committee of Experts was a "bona fide gesture" from the government to clear the air. The law officer even invited the Supreme Court to frame the terms of reference of the Committee. He said the Committee's task would be "highly technical". He said it would be peopled by "neutral experts". "A government-appointed committee should be trusted... You must know that everything on this issue is based on news reports, but let the Committee go into it..." Mr. Mehta

Mr. Sibal submitted that France has initiated a national level investigation into the Pegasus surveillance. Israel has raided the offices of the NSO Group, which is the creator of Pegasus. The U.S. courts are seized of the issue. "But India still says everything is alright... This is wholly unacceptable," Mr. Sibal sub-

fear for their families lations. Students studying in Mumbai too, had returned

home following the pandemic, and are now desperate to Around 92 Afghan students studying in the University of Mysuru have requestsaid a distraught Matiullah. ed the Director's assistance There are students stuck in extending their student visas. Interestingly, out of the 2,000 applicants from inter-

> belong to Afghan students. The sudden withdrawal of the U.S. from Afghanistan has led to an exodus of people from their homeland fearing violent reprisal. Canada, Britain, Europe, Turkey are suddenly faced with the prospect of providing a safe haven for the fleeing refugees. India, too, will have to take a hard look at the looming crisis.

national students, over 1,300

(With inputs from K. Shiva Shanker, Hyderabad. Jaideep Deo Bhanj, New Delhi. C.P. Sajit, Kasaragod, G. Krishnakumar, Kochi, Alok Rajeev Deshpande, Mumbai, Shankar Bennur, Mysu-

Opposition blocking laws meant to spur economy, says Nirmala

I am not sure greater scrutiny was the desire of the parties, says Finance Minister

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday took on the Opposition for its obstructionist approach in Parliament on legislations aimed at boosting the economy's revival and dismissed criticism of rushing through the passage of Bills.

"They ask us – What have we done for the economy? But when we are doing it, they were there to obstruct. This is a sad, very sorry situation," said Ms. Sitharaman, who steered seven Bills pertaining to her Ministries in the monsoon session, including changes to tax laws to scrap retrospectively applicable provisions.

Some of the Bills were

Make cow

rearing must

for contesting

polls: Minister

A Minister in the BJP go-

vernment in Madhya Pra-

desh on Monday suggest-

ed that rearing of cows be

made mandatory for con-

Minister for New and

Renewable Energy and

Environment Hardeep

Singh Dang also proposed

a collection of ₹500 per

month from those em-

ployees of the State go-

monthly salary of more

than ₹25,000 for the pro-

tection of cows and law to

ensure that all sections of

society contribute for pro-

has made all suggestions

in his personal capacity.

The Minister said he

tecting cows.

vernment getting

testing elections.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



From the outside, it may look like we pushed the Bills through without discussion, but we were ready for a discussion

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN

passed within minutes over persistent bedlam in both Houses, while the General

Insurance Business (Nationalisation) Amendment Bill, 2021, was passed last Wednesday in the Rajya Sabha amid shocking scenes that are now being probed by Vice-President Venkaiah Naidu. The Opposition had demanded the Bill be sent to a select committee for scruti-

"From the outside, it may look like we pushed the Bills through without discussion, but we were ready for a discussion. If the argument [against passing the Bills] is that greater scrutiny is required, I am not sure that was the desire [of the Opposition], because there was huge hungama [ruckus] even over the Factoring Bill, where a Parliamentary Standing Committee had examined it and sent recommendations," she pointed

"I was looking forward to a session where the Opposition would discuss the Bills and standing up and answering them... But in most Bills, only some members could participate [in the debate]," she said.

"The economy is now clearly coming out of the challenges posed by the second COVID-19 wave - core sectors are seeing substantial growth, power consumption is growing and even the private sector is coming around well... We are here to hear and will keep responding," she said, adding that timely legislative support was necessary for the econo-

Pawar underlines need to lift 50% cap on quota

'Plan to let States decide OBCs is hasty'

STAFF REPORTER MUMBAI

The Central government's hasty move to pass the Bill giving rights to States to identify OBCs without lifting the 50% reservation limit is to deceive the OBC community, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief Sharad Pawar said on Monday.

Addressing a press conference on a wide range of issues at the NCP headquarters, Mr. Pawar also targeted Union Home Minister Amit Shah over the Pegasus spyware issue, saying that it could be the Home Ministry which had got involved and a probe may reveal the truth.

"All States in the country have already crossed the 50% reservation limit, including Maharashtra. Giving rights to the States to identify OBCs will not serve any

purpose, because the reservation limit has not been lifted. All of the Opposition members raised this issue in Parliament, which went unanswered from the government's side," Mr. Pawar

Rallying OBCs

Till the reservation cap is lifted, even Marathas cannot be given benefits of reservation, Mr. Pawar pointed out, adding that his party will be uniting all OBC forces to create public opinion demanding the removal of 50% reservation limit. Mr Pawar said a caste census must be held, empirical data should be provided to the State governments and 50% reservation limit should be lifted. "Only then OBCs will get actual benefits, otherwise they will continue to be misled," he added.

FinMin slams T.N.'s stand on fuel taxes

Nirmala Sitharaman says State hiked rates by ₹7 before cut, blames DMK for backing UPA's oil bonds

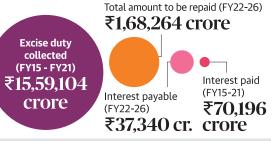
VIKAS DHOOT NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday took on the DMK administration in Tamil Nadu for reducing State levies on petroleum products by ₹3 a litre, after an earlier hike of ₹7 a litre (by the previous AIADMK regime), and accused it of being party to the UPA's "trickery" of lowering fuel prices

by issuing oil bonds. Conceding that consumers were justified in wishing for lower fuel prices, Ms. Sitharaman, however, didn't signal any imminent relief from the Centre on the excise duties and cess it levies, stressing that fuel prices are "a very difficult issue" and "the Petroleum Ministry is seized of the matter".

"It need not always be the case, that the Centre should

Only a fraction | The ₹1.7 lakh crore worth of principal and interest to be repaid on active oil bonds between FY22 and FY26 forms only 11% of the ₹15.6 lakh crore collections through excise duty on petroleum products between FY15 and FY21. The interest paid between FY15-21 is just 4.5% of the excise duty collections



■ In FY21, the excise duty collections from petroleum products stood at ₹3.71 lakh crore

cut (taxes) and then States will follow... A taxpayer is only looking at the price and wants it to come down, (they) don't care whether it is Central taxes or State tax-

Arguing that States gained more than the Centre from higher fuel prices as they charged ad-valorem taxes while the Centre's taxes were fixed, Ms. Sitharaman alluded to the Tamil Nadu

Budget announcement to cut State taxes on fuel.

"It is very interesting the taxes were hiked by ₹7 a litre and now brought down by ₹3... I am not pointing a finger. It's a decision of the State government. The present dispensation of Tamil Nadu was also in power when oil bonds worth ₹1.44 lakh crore were issued by the UPA to show reduced oil prices in 2013. Who is paying for it... the Modi 2.0 government," the Minister said.

White paper

Ms. Sitharaman also referred to the white paper issued by the new Tamil Nadu administration, which indicates the State has about ₹5 lakh crore of debt to contend with. "If (Prime Minister Narendra) Modi *ji* had released such a paper in 2014, we wouldn't have to explain this (high fuel prices)... a white paper should have been issued to say what we inherited as oil bonds from the UPA.

"Look at the way governments have handled such a delicate issue. Look at the trickery... they say they reduced prices, so we should do it too," the Minister concluded. "Today, you are asking me why we are not reducing the prices. I am subsidising the reduction they had offered. So far, ₹70,195.72 crore has been paid as interest on outstanding bonds worth around ₹1.31 lakh crore," she added.

"Another ₹37,840 crore is payable as interest till 2025-26, taking the interest alone close to ₹1 lakh crore," she asserted, adding this is also +taxpayer money.

Sushmita Dev joins Trinamool

Spotlight is back on leadership issues in party as Mahila Congress president quits

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI/KOLKATA

Sushmita Dev. former Lok Sabha member from Assam and president of the All-India Mahila Congress, joined the Trinamool Congress on Monday in the presence of the party's national general secretary, Abhishek Banerjee, and leader in the Rajya Sabha, Derek O'Brien.

She also met Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee at the State Secretariat 'Nabanna

"Will give it all I have got..@MamataOfficial thank you # Khela Hobe," Ms. Dev replied to a tweet from the party's official handle that welcomed her into the Trinamool family.

With yet another highprofile exit, the spotlight is back on the leadership issue within the Congress. Kapil Sibal, one of Congress's



New beginnings: Trinamool leader Abhishek Banerjee welcoming Sushmita Dev in Kolkata on Monday. ■PTI

group of 23 dissenters (G-23), tweeted that the "oldies" are blamed for trying to "strengthen" the Congress while the party continues to "move with eyes wide shut".

Lok Sabha member Karti Chidambaram said the party needed to reflect why people were leaving and there was "no point in being blasé about it".

> Ms. Dev was once considered a close aide of former

party chief Rahul Gandhi. Her exit may have implications for Opposition unity. A section of Congress leaders have often accused the Trinamool of "poaching" their leaders in Bengal and the high-profile exit comes barely four days before Congress president Sonia Gandhi virtually interacts with Ms. Banerjee.

The first indications of Ms. Dev's exit came in the form of a change in her bio on her Twitter handle where she called herself a "former member of the Indian National Congress". Then her letter to Congress president Sonia Gandhi, dated August 15, surfaced on social media. In the letter, she expressed her desire to start a new chapter in public service.

Ms. Dev did not mention a reason, but her comments after meeting the West Bengal Chief Minister may hold a clue. "It was an excellent discussion and clearly, she [Mamata Banerjee] has excellent future vision for the party and I hope to be helpful in that regard," said Ms. Dev.

Stunned by the development, Congress spokesperson Randeep Surjewala first claimed that Ms. Dev's letter had not reached Ms. Gandhi, and then wished his former colleague the "very best" for her future.

TMC's ambitions may get a shot in the arm

Dev could help expand party in N-E

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT GUWAHATI/KOLKATA

Former Mahila Congress president Sushmita Dev's entry could give a boost to the national ambitions of the Trinamool Congress (TMC) via some north-eastern States, specifically Assam and Tripura that have a sizeable Bengali population.

Ms. Dev, a former MP from southern Assam's Silchar constituency, quit the Congress on Sunday night and joined the TMC in Kolkata on Monday.

She later met West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. "I had a fruitful discussion with the CM. She clearly has an excellent vision for the party and I hope to be helpful in that regard," Ms. Dev said in a video sent via WhatsApp, indicating the role the TMC expects her to play in strengthening the party in Assam.

The TMC had in the past 30 days made it clear that it had set its sights on the northeast, by befriending Assam's firebrand activistturned-MLA Akhil Gogoi, and sending senior party leaders to Tripura, to the visible annoyance of the ruling BJP there.

Mr. Gogoi wields influence in some pockets of the Assamese-dominated

geographically and psychologically separated from the Bengali-dominated Barak Valley comprising three southern Assam districts and 15 of Assam's 126 Assembly seats. Ms. Dev was considered the tallest Congress leader

Brahmaputra Valley that is

ken over from her father and former Union Minister Santosh Mohan Dev. A senior TMC leader in Kolkata said the party was looking for a credible face to extend its influence in the northeast, and there "cannot be anyone better than

of Barak Valley, having ta-

Ms. Dev who brings the legacv of her father with her". There is an air of hope in Tripura, primarily because of her father's role in installing a Congress government in 1988 and winning the Tripura West parliamentary

constituency in 1999. "Tripura has a long association with the Dev family, and there is no reason why Sushmita cannot replicate her father's success for TMC. Disgruntlement with the BJP-led government has already seen many people joining our party," Subal Bhowmik, a former Congress veteran who joined the TMC recently, told The Hindu.

Meghalaya to probe killing of ex-militant

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT GUWAHATI

Barely 24 hours after State capital Shillong descended into chaos, the Meghalaya government on Monday ordered a judicial probe into the killing of former extremist leader Cheristerfield Thangkhiew by the police.

Curfew ordered

The government also extended the curfew till 5 a.m. on Wednesday and banned mobile Internet services in four districts for another 24 hours while deploying five companies of Border Security Force and Central Reserve Police Force to help restore normality in Shillong.

HC seeks Centre's response to petition on data breaches

Plea flags inaction of CERT-In, importance of cyber-security

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has asked the Centre to respond to a petition highlighting the inaction of the Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) over reports of alleged cybersecurity breaches and data leaks on online platforms of BigBasket, Domino's, MobiKwik and Air

Iustice Rekha Palli granted time to the Centre's counsel to seek instructions on the issue while posting the case for hearing on Septem-

The petition filed by Yar-



hearing on September 23.

lagadda Kiran Chandra, general secretary of the Free Software Movement of India, said that despite numerrepresentations

cy operational since 2004 for responding to computer security incidents. The petition stated that there was no law governing

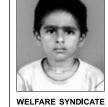
had been done so far.

CERT-In to investigate the al-

leged data breaches nothing

CERT-In is the nodal agen-

data protection in India currently. "Thereby, the aggrieved users do not have any legislative recourse against such breaches. Therefore, an investigation by CERT-In on frequent data breaches at mass level becomes important to safeguard the privacy of users," it said.



Rahul Varman is a 6 years old boy hailing from a poor family. He is suffering from Neuroblastoma with Skull metastasis and needs Rs.8,00,000/- for the Autologous Bone Marrow Transplant at V.S.Hospital, Chennai. Kindly help him to have a new life. Donations sent by Ch/D.D. favouring V.S.Medical Trust will be acknowledged. The donations sent through Ch/D.D/NEFT Transfer & GOOGLE PAY (Canara Bank, Nungambakkam Branch, A/C No.60182010063310, IFSC No. CNRB010fol18) favouring WOMEN'S No. CNRB010fol18) favouring WOMEN'S well-sent through the cheque. All correspondence is done through WWS. Read. Public Charitable

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wave of the pandemic.

Evacuation paused as Kabul airport shuts

Taking steps to repatriate Indian citizens, will stand by all Afghan partners, says government

SUHASINI HAIDAR

NEW DELHI Concern about Indian diplomats, security personnel and citizens grew on Monday, as the Afghanistan airspace was shut down for commercial flights and thousands of Afghans seeking to flee the country overran the tarmac at the Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul.

In meetings led by the Cabinet Secretary, officials of the Union Home and External Affairs Ministries and the National Security Council held briefings about the "deteriorating" security situation in Kabul and the plans for evacuating Indian nationals, Sikhs and Hindus and Afghans who have been India's "partners", indicating for the first time that the government may be open to accepting Afghans of all religions.

According to sources, India is hoping to use its military C-17 Globemaster aircraft to bring back diplomats, security personnel and 15 to 20 remaining Indian nationals from Kabul, but this is contingent on access to the road to the Kabul airport, manned by the Taliban, access into the airport, which is being secured by the U.S.-led NATO forces, and the permission to land flights.

A C-17 landed at the airport's military area on Sunday night, and brought back about 40 Indian nationals on Monday morning. Officials said another C-17 stands "ready" to bring back the rest, including Embassy staff, personnel of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police that guard the Embassy, and other Indian nationals.

"Commercial operations from Kabul airport have been suspended today. This has forced a pause in our repatriation efforts. We are awaiting the resumption of flights to restart the process," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a statement after no Air India flights were able to land and take off from the airport, a



Fear factor: Women with children trying to get inside the aiport in Kabul on Monday. ■REUTERS

day after gun-toting Taliban militia took control of the

According to videos of the incident, three Afghans were killed when they tried to cling on to the wing of a U.S. military plane taking off from the airport and fell to their deaths, adding to the panic among the crowds gathered there.

Meanwhile, the MEA said it was "in touch" with members of Afghanistan's Sikh and Hindu communities and would facilitate their "repatriation" to India if they

wished to leave.

"There are also a number of Afghans who have been our partners in the promotion of our mutual developmental, educational and people-to-people endeavours. We will stand by them," the MEA statement added. Officials did not confirm the numbers, but the Indian Embassy in Kabul, which has remained operational through the developments in Kabul,

had issued dozens of visas in the past week.

Asked about how many Indians remain in Afghanistan, an official who did not wish to be named said most Indians working on various construction and infrastructure projects in Afghanistan had left already as the Embassy had put out several advisories asking all workers, engineers, and media personnel to take commercial flights and return to India. This number is down from about 1,500 Indians that were working in Afghanistan, according to a reply by the government in Parliament in early August.

"We had circulated emergency contact numbers and had also been extending assistance to community members. We are aware that there are still some Indian nationals in Afghanistan who wish to return and we are in touch with them," the MEA state-

> (With inputs from Dinakar Peri)

Agencies brace for sharp rise in drug trafficking

'Taliban will rely heavily on drug money to maintain control'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The anti-drug law enforcement agencies are suspecting a steep surge in crossborder trafficking of heroin and crystal methamphetamine with the rapid Taliban takeover in Afghanistan.

"Drugs have been a major source of revenue for the Taliban. With the collapse of Afghanistan's economy, the Taliban will rely heavily on drug money to maintain control over their cadres. In the recent past, we have already noticed an increase in drug trafficking in the region, mostly through maritime routes," said a senior Customs official.

According to the latest World Drug Report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Afghanistan reported a 37% increase in the extent of land used for illicit cultivation of opium



Farmers tending to opium fields in Helmand Province, in this file photo.

poppy during 2020 compared with the previous year. Heroin is manufactured from opium. The country accounted for 85% of the global opium production last year. Despite the improved capabilities of the Afghan specialised units over the years, drug seizures and arrests had minimal impact on the opium-poppy

cultivation. "The economic crisis brought on by the pandemic will only increase the appeal of illicit crop cultivation," the report said.

Afghanistan is also turning out to be a major source for methamphetamine. In Iran, the proportion of Afghan-origin methamphetamine seizure increased from less than 10% in 2015 to over 90% in 2019. The drug is prepared using ephedrine extracted from Ephedra plants. Afghanistan's southwestern region (Helmand, Kandahar, Nimroz, Uruzgan, and Zabul Provinces) continued to dominate opium-poppy cultivation and accounted for 68% of the national total in 2020, it said.

The U.S.'s Drug Enforcement Administration reported last quarter that the value of narcotics intercepted from April 1 through June 14, 2021, was over \$20 million.

India should prepare for security threats: Madhav

We should not be caught off guard: Rao

NISTULA HEBBAR NEW DELHI

The BJP on Monday did not put out any official statement on the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan but two former general secretaries of the party cautioned that the development did not portend well for India and that the country should brace itself for terror at-

Former BJP general secretary and current executive member of the RSS Ram Madhav tweeted that the Pakistani mentoring of the Taliban would lead to severe security challenges in India. "Taliban has over 30,000 mercenaries trained in Pakistan by ISI, in power in Kabul. Taliban leadership will now deploy them 'elsewhere' with the help of mentor Pakistan. India should brace for serious security challenges. Taliban may eventually consume Pakistan and China too, but the immediate threat is for India."

Another former general secretary and current incharge for Madhya Pradesh P. Muralidhar Rao declared that a "war" had in fact just begun rather than concluded. "Unfolding events in #Afghanistan are ringing alarm bells all over including India. If anyone believes 'war is over' - [they are] living in a fool's paradise. New war has begun. We Indians should not get caught 'off guard'!" he tweeted.

Privately too, party leaders said the short-term outlook was "quite bad" for India as it might soon become the focus of terror attacks from a secure Taliban and a Pakistan in control of Afghanistan and the militia there. The Taliban had sheltered the hijackers of Air India flight IC 814 during the tenure of the NDA government under Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, leading to the death of one passenger and the release of three terrorists.

Broader representation must: India

Afghanistan cannot ever again be a base for terrorism, say U.S., China at UNSC meet

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) held its second meeting on Afghanistan in 10 days, as the country witnessed chaotic scenes over the weekend, with the Taliban taking over Kabul.

Addressing the meeting, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres asked the insurgents to protect the rights of Afghans. "The world is following events there with a heavy heart and deep disquiet about what lies ahead,"

"I remind all parties of their obligation to protect civilians," he said. "I call upon the Taliban and all parties to respect and protect international humanitarian law and the rights and freedoms of all persons."

Mr. Guterres said there were "chilling" reports of "severe restrictions on human rights" emerging from across the country. He said he was particularly con-



the United Nations Security Council on Monday. • REUTERS

women and girls and that their "hard-won" rights must be protected.

Afghanistan's Permanent Representative to the UN Ghulam Isaczai said, "We are extremely concerned about Taliban not honouring their promises and commitments made in their statements at Doha and other international fora."

India's Permanent Representative T.S. Tirumurti said the situation was of great concern to India. "As a neighbour of Afghanistan cerned about the rights of and a friend to its people,

the situation is of great concern to us in India. Everyone is concerned about the increasing violations of the fundamental rights of Afghan citizens," he said. Saying a dispensation with a broad representation would gain more "acceptability' and 'legitimacy", Mr. Tirumurti called for the voices of Afghan women, the aspirations of its children and the rights of its minorities to be respected. The Ambassador did not refer to the Taliban

by name during his speech.

and the region would feel safer if there was zero tolerance for terrorism and if Afghanistan did not become a base from which terrorists could attack other countries, he said.

American Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield said civilians, including journalists and non-combatants, must be protected. The U.S. said Afghanistan cannot ever again be a base for terrorism. It was joined by China in this. Beijing's deputy representative Geng Shuang said terror groups had developed in Afghanistan and named the IS, the Al-Qaeda and the ETIM (East Turkestan Islamic Movement) as examples.

"China takes note of what was said by the Afghan Taliban on Sunday that war in Afghanistan had ended and that it would negotiate to establish an open inclusive Islamic government and it will take responsible actions to ensure the safety of Afghan citizens and foreign Afghanistan's neighbours sions," Mr. Geng said.

Govt. abdicating duty to rescue citizens: Congress

'Mature response needed from Centre'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

Terming the situation in Afghanistan as "alarming", the Congress on Monday questioned why the Narendra Modi government "refused" to set in motion a plan to evacuate Indian citizens and protect India's strategic assets there.

At a press conference, chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said it was a gross abdication of duty not to have an evacuation plan and asked the Prime Minister and the External Affairs Minister to clearly spell out "our policy for safe return of our citizens, Embassy personnel as also our future relationship".

"The Congress party stands solidly behind protecting India's interests and expects a mature political and diplomatic response from our govt. over the complete collapse of the govt. in Afghanistan and Taliban takeover ... The stunning silence of Narendra Modi govt. is deeply disturbing and highly intriguing, which is beyond any reasonable understanding," Mr. Surjewala said.

"Modi government's refusal to set in motion a wellthought-out plan to evacuate our citizens is a gross abdication of its duty and is totally unacceptable.

He said the "unexplained silence" would give rise to a reasonable apprehension that the government was hiding something from the country. "We are still in the dark over Modi government's role in Doha talks. Need of the hour is that the Modi government wakes up from its slumber and protects Indian citizens in Afghanistan and tells the country how it will tackle the dangerous situation in

"There is an urgent need to revisit our geo-political interests in this background and its impact on J&K."

the neighbourhood."

'We fear for our families back home'

Afghans are worried over their future and loved ones left behind

JAIDEEP DEO BHANJ

Safely seated on a packed Kam Air flight that left Kabul at 11.45 a.m. on Sunday, a 27year-old man from Afghanistan was overcome not only with a feeling of relief as he had managed to flee his country in the nick of time but also with fear as he wondered what would happen to his family that he was leaving behind.

Behind the counter of a medical store in the bylanes of Lajpat Nagar here 24 hours later, the man, who preferred to remain anonymous, said the scene at the airport in Kabul was one of chaos and desperation as thousands tried to leave the

"I had a business visa for India and my father is a political figure who could use his influence to get me out. I was lucky to be able to board the flight. At the airport, people were trying to use medical visas and any other docu-



Delhi on Monday. • SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA ments they had to try and fly

out before the city fell into the hands of the Taliban. The flight I was on was packed beyond capacity and there were people even sitting on the seats reserved for the crew and on the aisle,"

Many Afghan nationals living in colonies such as Bhogal and Lajpat Nagar said they were afraid to speak about what was happening in their country and also to disclose their identity. "The Taliban rule by instilling fear

and they have managed to do that. I am here as a refugee and I don't know what will happen to me or where I will go but I know that going back to Afghanistan is not an option. The progress that the country had made in the last 20 years is all over," said a 35-year-old man who runs a mobile recharge shop in Bhogal.

Farshid Mohamaddi, who works at a grocery store in Lajpat Nagar, said thinking about the situation was like living in a nightmare.

find employment and a better life in India but is finding it hard to find employment. "My dream is to somehow reach Canada where I will be able to give a better life to my children. Here, over the past few days when many people from Afghanistan started coming, rents which were very low due to the pandemic are also rising. Our lives are now in the hands of governments that are willing to help us as we have lost our home. The question of going back does not arise," he said.

Several Afghans could be seen arriving from various parts of the country to the colony in Lajpat Nagar to find out what they could do about extending their visa to stay on in India. Saddam, who arrived from Rajasthan, said: "We do not have permits to stay on. I have come to Delhi with the hope that we can stay on in India or go to another country that will

He came with his family to





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Dhaka for a democratic Afghanistan

'Bangladesh would be happy to continue to work with the people of Afghanistan'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The Taliban takeover of Afghanistan will have an impact on South Asia and beyond, said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bangla-

Dhaka has urged all sections in Afghanistan to maintain peace and ensure safety of all, including foreign nationals. In a statement issued after

the dramatic takeover of capital Kabul by Taliban fighters, Dhaka said Afghanistan was an "integral part of South Asia" and that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina felt the South Asian region "must grow and prosper together for this development to be sustainable".

"Bangladesh believes that a democratic and pluralistic Afghanistan as chosen by its people is the only guarantee of stability and development in the country," it said.

"In this regard, Bangladesh considers itself a potential development partner and a friend of Afghanistan," the Ministry of Foreign Affairs added.

Dhaka said the task of rebuilding Afghanistan was upon the people of Afghanis-"Bangladesh would be

happy to continue to work with the people of Afghanistan and the international community for the socioeconomic development of the country," the statement declared.

Health Ministry says 56.81 cr. vaccine doses have been provided to States and Union Territories so far

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI Nearly 3,250 doses of CO-VID-19 vaccines have been administered to those who have been recorded on the CoWIN portal as people with disabilities. Additionally, 1.87 lakh vaccine doses have been administered to prisoners across the country, according to information submitted by the Health Ministry in the Rajya Sabha during the recently concluded Parliament session. It has noted that this data is as per the information available on the portal as on August 4.

While the Ministry is yet to take a decision on the mixed use of COVID-19 vaccines, officials confirmed to The Hindu that talks were on to ensure speedy availability of foreign vaccines cleared by the government for use in

It said on Monday that 56,81,14,630 vaccine doses had been provided to the



Making a mark: About 55 crore vaccine doses have been administered so far across the country. • SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

States and Union Territories so far, through all sources. "Of this, the total consumption, including wastage, is 54,22,75,723 doses (according to data available at 8 a.m.). More than 2.89 crore (2,89,47,890) balance and unutilised COVID vaccine doses are still available with

tals to be administered," the

Ministry said in its release. The Ministry said that it had issued directions to all stakeholders on near-tohome COVID vaccination centres (NHCVC) for elderly and differently abled citizens earlier this year, making the programme vaccination

they may not be able to travel to the vaccination

Community approach

'The NHCVC follows a community-based approach where the sessions can be conducted nearer to home, e.g. at community/resident welfare association (RWA) centres, panchayat ghar, school buildings etc. for the elderly and differently abled citizens. States have been again issued advisory regarding facilities to be provided to differently abled persons for COVID-19 treatment, management and vaccination, stating that vaccination can also be prioritised for differently abled persons," the Ministry said.

It said the Central government had made all arrangements to secure COVID-19 vaccines for the eligible beneficiaries as per production and availability.

"The Central government

At least 3.94 lakh missed Covaxin 2nd dose within 6-week window has been providing free supply of COVID vaccines in enough quantity to States for

Roughly one in five in Tamil Nadu missed the second jab

PON VASANTH B.A

The number of people missing their second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine remains a cause for concern in Tamil Nadu, with the latest data showing that at least 3.94 lakh missed their second dose of Covaxin within the Indian Council of Medical Research-advised window of a maximum of six weeks.

A similar analysis done by The Hindu two months ago showed that 1.41 lakh people had missed their second dose as of second week of June. By then, the State had administered a total of 16.6 lakh doses of Covaxin, including the first and the second dose. Since then, the total number of Covaxin doses administered has more than doubled to 35.6 lakh as of August 15.

Consequently, the number of people who missed



had taken their first dose of Covaxin as of July 4.

their second dose within the six-week period has also more than doubled from 1.41 lakh to 3.94 lakh. In other words, 22%, or roughly one in every five persons who took the first dose six weeks ago, failed to take their second dose.

According to the data available on vaccination done through governmentrun centres and camps, 17,72,296 people had taken

their first dose of Covaxin as of July 4.

Ideally, all of them should have taken their second dose by August 15, which marked the end of the sixweek window. However, onlv 13,78,779 people had taken their second dose as of

Number could be higher The difference of 3.94 lakh is

only the minimum number of people who had missed. The actual number could be higher as the number of second doses administered as on August 15 may include those who took their second dose in the past four to six weeks as well.

While people may have missed their second dose of Covishield as well, it was difficult to ascertain the number as the window advised by ICMR for Covishield kept

ESIC notifies relief scheme for COVID-hit

In case of death, dependents will get money every month

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Employees' State Insurance Corporation has notified a scheme for the dependents of ESI insured persons in case of death due to CO-VID-19 that would give a minimum of ₹1,800 a month.

The ESIC had published the details on June 18 inviting suggestions from the public. On August 11, the ESIC notified the scheme.

The scheme would cover the families of the insured



Many families lost loved ones during the second wave of the epidemic.

who had been registered on the ESIC portal for at least three months before being diagnosed with COVID-19 and had been in employment on the date of diagnosis. In case of death due to COVID-19, the spouse, son up to 25 years of age, unmarried daughter and widowed mother of the insured would be eligible for the relief.

The scheme, which would be effective for two years from March 24, 2020, would provide for 90% of the average daily wages of the insured to be paid to depen-

SC raises query on Tribunal Reforms Bill

Court asks Centre to give reasons for introducing Bill

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL

The Supreme Court on Monday challenged the government to produce material showing its reasons for introducing the Tribunal Reforms Bill, 2021, which abolishes nine appellate tribunals and revives provisions of an ordinance struck down by the Supreme Parliament.

A three-judge Bench, led by Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana, put the government in the dock about the complete absence of material justifying the Bill and the lack of proper debate in Parliament before it was made into law.

The Bill replaced the Tribunals Reforms (Rationalisation and Conditions of Service) Ordinance, 2021. The provisions in the ordinance regarding conditions of service and tenure of Tribunal Members and Chairpersons were struck down by the Supreme Court. However, the the Tribunal Reforms Bill introduced by Finance Minis-



administration to prioritised

beneficiaries as recommend-

ed by NEGVAC. It is also pro-

viding 15 days' advance visi-

bility of vaccine availability

to States, with an advice to

prepare and publicise in ad-

vance district-wise plan for

acceleration of vaccination

coverage while being cogni-

zant of the total availability

of Covid vaccines," said the

vaccination drive in the

country, the Ministry said

the pace of vaccination had

improved significantly from

an average 2.35 lakh doses

administered a day in Janu-

ary to an average 43.41 lakh a

day in July. The Central go-

vernment has issued de-

tailed Standard Operating

Procedures to facilitate vac-

cination of people without

identity cards, including pri-

soners," the Ministry said.

Giving an overview of the

Health Ministry.

ter Nirmala Sitharaman on August 2 in the Lok Sabha.

The Bill was passed in the Lok Sabha by voice vote without a debate amid protests by the Opposition parties over the Pegasus controversy and other laws. The Rajya Sabha cleared the Bill on August 9.

"In spite of the ordinance being struck down by the court, the Bill has been passed. There was no debate. We did not see any. We are not questioning the wisdom of the Parliament... We are not saying anything about the Parliament's power.... But at least we must know the reasons of the government in introducing the provisions re-appeared in Bill... the Honourable Minister has but just one word... Please show us the debate

Rajya Sabha Member Jairam Ramesh on Monday approached the Supreme

Jairam Ramesh files plea

unconstitutional provisions of the Tribunal Reforms Act of 2021, which revives an ordinance struck down by

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Ramesh said the 2021 Act, which abolishes nine key tribunals, threatens judicial independence by giving the government wide powers regarding appointments, service conditions, salaries, etc. of members of key tribunals.

the Supreme Court. Mr.

which took place on the Bill. This is a serious issue," Chief Justice Ramana said. Solicitor-General Tushar

Mehta submitted that the Bill had matured into an Act. It was passed by Parliament in its wisdom. "Can you show us the re-

cords giving the reasons for which the Bill was placed in the Parliament? Can you show us what was discussed about the Bill before it was passed," Chief Justice Ramana asked. The CJI said that despite

the Supreme Court's observations in an August 6 hearing and production of a note showing over 240 vacancies in key tribunals where thousands of cases were pending, not a single appointment had been made.

Mr. Mehta insisted that some appointments had been made to the Central Administrative Tribunal. The rest of the appointments were "under process"

"Show us one appointment that you have made... Whenever we ask the Ministry about tribunal appointments, you say it is 'under process'... If you want to make appointments, nothing prevents you from appointing... Till yesterday, we did not hear anything about any appointments to tribunals," the CJI voiced the court's scepticism.

The CJI repeated his question whether the government was moving towards closing down the tribunals.

The court scheduled the hearing on August 31.

HC judge

D.S. Naidu resigns

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Bombay High Court judge Justice Dama Seshadri Naidu has resigned on August 12 citing personal reasons.

He told The Hindu, "I resigned on August 12... It will come into effect from tomorrow [August 17]. It is purely personal, nothing lofty."
"I have been [a judge] at

the Bombay High Court, Kerala High Court and Andhra Pradesh, and now I intend to practise as a lawyer," he said.

Mr. Naidu said, "In south, no morning begins without *The Hindu*. I started reading The Hindu to learn about law."

He was transferred to the Bombay High Court in March 2019 from the Kerala High Court, where he was appointed a puisne judge on June 30, 2014.

Mr. Naidu, 59, hails from a hamlet near Tirupati in

+ Railway Minister gets 12 Janpath

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The government bungalow ter and Lok Janshakti Party leader Ram Vilas Paswan lived for three decades till his death in October 2020. 12 Janpath, has been allotted to Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, said a Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry official.

Paswan's family, including his son and MP Chirag Paswan, continue to stay at the address and were recently issued notice to vacate the property. Paswan's brother, Pashupati Kumar Paras, who was inducted into the Union Cabinet in July, has been allotted 7 Tughlak Road.

ED attaches assets linked to key NSCN(IM) cadre

'Outfit involved in extortion racket'

DEVESH K. PANDEY

The Enforcement Directorate has attached movable properties linked to some alleged key functionaries of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Isak-Muivah (NSCN-IM).

The accused persons have been identified as Rayilung Nsarangbe, a selfstyled colonel and treasurer of the NSCN (IM), his wife Ruth Chawang and Apam Muivah, secretary to the outfit's Ato Kilonser (prime minister). The assets worth ₹6.88 crore are in the form of bank balances, mutual funds insurance and

products. The ED probe is based on an FIR and chargesheet filed by the National Investigation Agency in December last year. It was alleged that the terror outfit ran a wellorganised extortion racket in Manipur and Nagaland, resulting in diversion of government funds. It had been criminally intimidating the companies involved in road construction projects in Manipur and collecting huge sums as illegal "tax".

The ED said the outfit's functionary in charge of four administrative districts in Manipur reported to Rayilung Nsarangbe, as he was the treasurer of the "collective leadership". Some of the money was being put in bank accounts in his name.

SC declines to hear Anil Deshmukh's plea

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

SCAN TO PLAY

The Supreme Court on Monday refused to intervene and grant interim relief to former Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh, who was seeking protection from arrest in a money-laundering

A three-judge Bench headed by Justice A.M. Khanwilkar said Mr. Deshmukh was free to access other remedies available to him under the law

Mr. Deshmukh's counsel said the case was a classic "political witch-hunt". Solicitor General Tushar Mehta,

for the Enforcement Directorate, countered that there were serious allegations of money laundering in the case.

The top court was hearing a batch of pleas, including those challenging the constitutional validity of certain provisions of the Prevention

of Money Laundering Act. The ED had earlier issued summons to the 71-year-old Nationalist Congress Party leader in connection with a criminal case registered under the PMLA related to an alleged ₹100-crore briberycum-extortion racket that led to his resignation.

Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh. He was enrolled as a member in the Bar Council of Andhra Pradesh in March 1997. In the early 2000s, he served in the High Court of Andhra Pradesh and civil and criminal courts in Hyderabad.

TH CROSSWORD+ 13328

18 Female, enthralled by drink gets ready to stray - situation

Display keystrokes of genius.

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23 Bringing back kit containing posh old musical instrument (5) 24 After all that's happened day before, nationalist triumphed all

25 Bits of coconut, horsegram, urad, tamarind – extremely nice,

ultimately savoury condiment (7) 26 Type of obstruction at ureter (6)

27 Ones used by smokers in bar, chasing hot model enthralled by

1 First space station sent up in orbit returns (6) 2 Condescend to accept small project (6)

6 Madam in anguish, drinking up spirit (5)

8 Result was pathetic! University expelled idlers (8)

15 Playing bingo in rush and becoming bankrupt (5.4) 16 Medical specialist eating starter of tuna fish (8)

17 Secretive president concealed information in novel (8) 19 Fight with revolting girl in European city (6) 20 Reports about extremely lumpy pedunculated tumours (6)

SUDOKU



Solution to puzzle 13327 Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

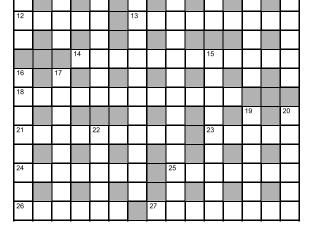
7 1 8 3 2 5 9 6 4 9 6 3 1 8 4 2 5 7 425679813 256743198 179268435 384951726 6 3 7 4 9 2 5 8 1 5 9 1 8 3 7 6 4 2 8 4 2 5 1 6 3 7 9

FAITH

Commitment to truth

Throughout Rama avatar, Valmiki establishes the nobility of human conduct that is shaped by dharma. Rama exemplifies the significance of the core values of truth, courage and love in the life of human beings, pointed out Sri R. Krishnamurthy Sastrigal in a discourse. Rama's adherence to satya is unimaginable. He shows that one can conquer the entire universe with satya which is synonymous with the omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent Supreme Brahman. Rama's mind is peaceful since He knows He has been truthful at all times. Rama knows that good and bad are manifestations of the same atma.

Virtue and vice do not affect him. So, when Kaikeyi has doubt about His willingness to fulfil the king's plighted word to her and she explicitly demands assurance from Him, He frankly speaks about Himself. He feels for Dasaratha's sorrowful plight. A king should keep his word and a son should obey the father. Dasaratha had promised Kaikeyi two boons in the past. He is tied down by the dharma to fulfil the pledge to her, and though he now repents for it, on no account can he go back on what had been promised. Rama regards Dasaratha as His teacher, father and friend. Whatever be the bidding of His father, be it to swallow deadly poison or jump into the fire or plunge into the ocean, He would do it without any hesitation. At this point, He says He will never break His word. He is one who does not speak twice. Later on in the Aranya Kanda, Rama, unable to bear the loss of Sita, would often break down in great grief. On one such occasion, lamenting most pitiably, He even contemplates taking His life. But then, He realises that such an act would tarnish Dasaratha's commitment to truth, for then Rama would not have fulfilled the 14-year period of exile in forest.



ACROSS

1 Steed goes berserk, breaking friend's foot (8) 5 Fruit given by woman eaten by father and wife (6)

10 One velling around after consuming drink in flat (7) **11** Unlucky in love, shy person endlessly drinks at home (7)

12 Possibly a guru or prophet (5) 13 Mafia boss in rally about to execute rebellious fellow (9)

14 Genial ace, busy maintaining record relating to study of ancestry (12)

21 Return pounds spent in cultivation of mulberries (9)

3 Iron Man, say, rose up frantically to save girl (9) 4 Bloody violent gangs darted around in a state of hostility (2,7,5)

7 Anchor-man's extremely creepy prediction (8)

9 Have every single advantage like a card-sharp might? (4,3,3,4)

22 Individual overwhelmed by beer on vacation makes blunder (5)

How Taliban took Kabul without a fight

The road to their final victory started from the agreement they signed with the U.S. in February 2020

STANLY JOHNY

The U.S. seemed to have concluded long ago that they lost the war in Afghanistan. What they did not expect was the speed with which Kabul fell. The latest U.S. intelligence estimates said the Taliban could capture Kabul in 90 days, The Washington Post reported on August 10. But the city fell in a single day, without even a fight, on August 15. How did that happen?

Trump-Taliban deal

Though the Taliban overran most of the country within days, the road to their final victory started from the agreement they signed with the U.S. in February 2020. The Trump administration appointed a special envoy for Afghanistan, held direct talks with the Taliban bypassing the Afghan government and signed an exit agreement. In the agreement, the U.S. could not extract any concession from the Taliban towards a political settlement in Afghanistan. The Taliban did not even agree to a ceasefire. And the American focus was on getting their troops and diplomats out of Afghanistan safelv. In the deal, the U.S. agreed to withdraw its troops by May 1, 2021 in re-

from Afghan soil. This provided the Taliban a sense of victory, while demoralising the Afghan troops. Pro-Taliban channels immediately celebrated the Doha deal as their victory over America. They said if they could defeat the U.S., the world's pre-eminent superpower, the Afghan forces would not be much of a challenge. During the war, the Taliban's main challenge was the U.S. air power, which had caused devastating blows to the insurgency. Since the Doha agreement, the U.S. airstrikes went down drastically, in return for the Taliban stopping attacks on Ameri-

turn for assurances from the

Taliban that they would not

let terrorist groups operate



Panic and chaos: People running along a U.S. plane taxiing on the tarmac at Kabul airport. • AP

can forces completely. This allowed the Taliban to regroup across the country, plan for the next offensive and refurbish the supply lines. Legitimised by the U.S. deal, the Taliban also reached out to regional players such as China, Russia and Iran to neutralise their role in the coming big fight. And then they were waiting for the Americans to start

The Ghani factor The Ghani administration

was internally divided. The last two presidential elections - 2014 and 2019 - were disputed. After both elections, the U.S. had to interfere, striking a deal between Mr. Ghani and his main rival. Abdullah Abdullah, to stitch together the unity government. Mr. Ghani, according to both his friends and rivals, was mercurial, impulsive and isolated. He projected himself as the rightful Pashtun leader of Afghanistan, alienating other ethnic leaders, who made up the erstwhile Northern Alliance that resisted the Taliban in the 1990s. Mr. Abdullah, half Pashtun and half Tajik, was a rival who was accommodated in the government. Abdul Rashid Dostum, the Uzbek warlord and Mr. Ghani's former Vice-President who's facing serious allegations, was living abroad. Atta Muhammad Nur, the Tajik "strongman" in the north, had publicly challenged the government. He was sacked as the Governor of Balkh province by Mr. Ghani in January 2018.

Mr. Ghani, a former World Bank economist who has specialised on failed states, could not build an administration that commands over at least all the anti-Taliban forces. He tried to weaken the former warlords in the name of strengthening the national forces, as well as shore up his political base, but in the course, he weakened the anti-Taliban coalition further. So, well before the American withdrawal started on May 1, the Ghani administration looked like a loose confederation of different fiefdoms. What glued them all together was the American troops. And once it was clear that the Americans were leaving, the cracks in the administration started widening. All the Taliban had to do was to push it from outside.

American withdrawal

The Taliban launched their offensive on May 1, the day the remaining U.S. troops started withdrawing. The Afghan government had the provincial centres under its control and set up outposts across the rural areas, which were provided supplies by air. Mr. Biden withdrew not just American air support but also the intelligence agents and contractors who were serving Afghanistan's ban. war planes and helicopters. This has, besides the psycho-

logical and political impacts **NEWS ANALYSIS**

of the withdrawal, debilitated the Afghan air force, the only superiority the Afghan troops had in the war. Knowing this, the Taliban had also launched an assassination campaign, targeting Afghan pilots. According to a Reuters special report dated July 9, seven Afghan pilots were assassinated in recent months.

As an overstretched and resource-limited air force came under pressure, the supply lines dried up. The Taliban could easily overrun remote government outposts and sweep through the country's north, which was, in the 1990s, the epicentre of the anti-Taliban resistance. The Taliban strategy was to take the rural districts first and then lay siege to the cities, allowing them to fall. With cities under their control, they encircled Kabul.

The turning point came on August 6, when the first city, Zaranj, fell to the Taliban. The Taliban allowed the government troops to walk away if they surrendered with their equipment. In some cases, according to a report in The Wall Street Journal, surrendered soldiers, unpaid for months, were even given pocket money by the Taliban. Those who resisted were killed. So Afghan troops, lacking reinforcements, faced two choices - either surrender and save their lives or fight to death for a government that cannot get its act together and was abandoned by even the U.S. In most cases, they chose the first. So did several government officials. In Ghazni, the provincial Governor handed the keys to his office to a Taliban commander along with flowers. The Governor was escorted out of his office by the Tali-

In several cities, they overran prisons and recruited prisoners to their ranks. As soldiers surrendered without a fight, cities after cities fell to the Taliban. Within eight days after Zaranj fell, more than half of the provincial capitals were under their control. Kabul became an island in the Taliban sea.

On August 14, even when the city was surrounded, Mr. Ghani tried to show a brave face, saying his focus was on remobilising Afghan troops. But it was practically impossible. The soldiers across the country knew that the war had been lost. And they were unlikely to fight for Kabul alone. Five of the seven Army corps of the Afghan National Army were already taken over by the Taliban.

By the evening, Mazar-e-Sharif in the north, one of the most anti-Taliban cities. fell. Mr. Ghani knew the time was up. On Sunday morning, he left the Presidential palace for the U.S. Embassy where he spent a few hours. In the afternoon, with a group of close aides, he flew out of the capital. By nightfall, the Taliban were in Arge-Shahi (Citadel of the King), the Presidential palace built by the 19th century Emir Abdur Rahman Khan. Almost 20 years after the U.S. started its war on terror driving the Taliban out of power, life is back to square one for mil-

China says it hopes Taliban will 'ensure smooth transition'

'We expect them to curb terrorism, rebuild beautiful homeland'

ANANTH KRISHNAN

China's government said on Monday it hoped the Taliban would "fulfil its commitment to ensure a smooth transition" and "curb all kinds of terrorism" in Afghanistan following its rapid takeover of the country. "The situation in Afghan-

istan has undergone major changes and China respects the wishes and choices of the Afghan people," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said in Beijing. "The war has lasted over 40 years. To stop the war and realise peace is the voice of the over 30 million Afghan people and aspiration of the international community and regional countries. We noted the statement from the Afghan Taliban vesterday [Sunday] saying the war is over and that they will start consultations for establishing an open, inclusive Islamic government, and will take necessary action to ensure the safety of Afghan citizens and the foreign diplomatic corps. We expect the Taliban to fulfill its commitment to ensure a smooth transition of the situation in Afghanistan, curb all kinds of terrorism and criminal acts, keep the Afghan people away from wars and rebuild their beautiful homeland."

The call to stop terrorism echoed the message from Chinese officials late last month when they hosted a Taliban delegation in the city of Tianjin, marking a new chapter in Beijing's outreach to the group. With the unexpected speed of the Taliban takeover in the weeks since, Beijing is now hoping that early engagement will help secure its interests in the country, particularly with regard to its concerns over Jihadist groups with links to its western Xinjiang region that shares a border with Af-

Asked if China will recognise the new Taliban regime,

1. Name of the work

2. Total No. of Works

4. Class of Contractor

5. Period of Completion

Procurement Officer

Chief Engineer, Buildings & Bridge Rural Works,Odisha,

3. Estimated cost

6. Other details

Name of work

SITC of submersible pump sets

Ms. Hua said China "stands ready to develop goodneighbourly, friendly and cooperative relations with Afghanistan, and to play a constructive role in the peace and reconstruction of Afghanistan."

Taliban's expectations

"On many occasions, the Taliban has expressed the hope of developing sound relations with China, saying they look forward to China's participation in the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan, and that they will never allow any forces to use the Afghan territory to endanger China," she said. "We hope the Taliban will unite with all parties and ethnic groups in Afghanistan to establish a broad and inclusive political structure that suits its own national conditions to lay the foundation for realising a lasting peace in Afghanistan. China respects the right of the Afghan people to independently determine their own destiny."

While several countries have been evacuating their personnel and closing their missions in the country, Ms. Hua said China's Embassy in Kabul was "still operating normally" and "most of the Chinese citizens in Afghanistan have already returned to China.'

Beyond Monday's statement and the recent outreach to the Taliban, Beijing has long had its own concerns over both the speed of the earlier announced U.S. withdrawal as well as the Taliban's past links to terror groups, including the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) that has carried out attacks in Xinjiang.

Putting aside those concerns, the immediate mood in the Chinese state-controlled press was largely one of schadenfreude, highlighting the failures of the U.S. rather than the security concerns that still loom for both

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA OFFICE OF THE ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF, RURAL WORKS, ODISHA, BHUBANESWAR

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No.

Online-02

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2021-22

Other details can be seen in the bidding documents, which is available in website

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24 (Twenty Four) Calendar months as applicable

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(One)

Tender Date of release

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Chief Engineer (Buildings & Bridges), Rural Works, Odisha, Bhubaneswar

China and the region. China's state media exulted in the U.S. withdrawal, with official outlets slamming Washington for its "messy failure", "humiliation", and "impotence".

"United States troops entered Afghanistan two decades back in the name of a 'war on terror'. The U.S. then attempted to build a modern Afghan state. While the former hardly qualifies as the victory President Joe Biden claimed, its attempts at the latter are an unmistakable, unfolding, messy failure," the official China Daily said in an editorial.

Chinese media exults

The Communist Party-run Global Times, a tabloid published by the official People's Daily known for its often nationalistic slant, noted that many online were comparing the U.S. exit from Kabul to the fall of Saigon and this was "a clearer demonstration of U.S. impotence than the Vietnam War" showing the U.S. was "a paper tiger." In an editorial, the paper said the speed of the Taliban takeover was "undoubtedly a heavy blow to the U.S' and "declared the complete failure of U.S. intent to reshape Afghanistan." "In the meantime, the U.S.'s desperate withdrawal plan shows the unreliability of U.S. commitments to its allies: When its interests require it to abandon allies, Washington will not hesitate to find every excuse to do so," the paper said.

"The People's Liberation Army is heavily deployed around the Wakhan Corridor, a key zone for China's counter-terrorism mission that links China and Afghanistan," the paper said. One consistent message from Chinese experts, underlined by the paper on Monday, was to state that China "has no will to fill the vacuum the U.S. has left behind in Afghanistan".

Availability of Tender

07.09.2021

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From

18.08.2021

11.00 A.N

7 dead in airport chaos as Afghans flee militants

ASSOCIATED PRESS KABUI

Thousands of Afghans rushed into Kabul's main airport on Monday, some so desperate to escape the Taliban that they held onto a military jet as it took off and plunged to their deaths. At least seven people died in the chaos, U.S. officials said.

As the U.S. military and others continued evacuation flights, Afghans swarmed ov-

4 Palestinians

killed in West

Bank clashes

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Four Palestinians were

killed on Monday in clash-

es with Israeli security

forces at Jenin refugee

camp in the occupied West

opened at a short range by

a large number" of people,

said a spokesman for the Is-

rael Border Police. "The

police force fired back at

the terrorists,' he said.

Hichilema set

to be Zambia

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

President

"Heavy gunfire was

Bank.

er the international airport's tarmac. Some climbed into aircraft parked on the taxiway, while others dangled precariously off a jet bridge.

U.S. troops took positions to guard the active runway, but the crowd stormed past them. Gunshots rang out. As one U.S. Air Force Boeing C-17 Globemaster III tried to take off, a helicopter did low runs in front of it to try to drive people off the runway.

MEERA SRINIVASAN

President Gotabaya Raja-

paksa on Monday replaced

the country's Health Minis-

ter in the wake of growing

opposition and public criti-

cism over the government's

"mismanagement" of the

country's fourth wave of CO-

health authorities reported

over 3,000 cases a day and

record daily deaths - 161 on

August 14 - that they attri-

bute to the rapidly spread-

ing Delta variant. Despite

medical professionals' re-

peated calls for a country-

wide lockdown to help the

health sector cope, the go-

vernment has minimally

restricted mobility, mostly

during the night. President

Rajapaksa has asked health

sector officials to expedite

the ongoing vaccination

ter Pavithra Wanniarachchi,

who earlier made headlines

for endorsing a "potion"

that she claimed would

"cure" COVID-19, has now

been given charge of the

Transport Ministry, while

Sri Lanka's Health Minis-

Over the past week,

COLOMBO

VID-19.

drive.

Videos showed a group of Afghans hanging onto the plane just before takeoff and several falling through the air as the airplane rapidly gained altitude over the city.

Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said U.S. forces killed two people he described as carrying weapons.

All flights at the airport both military and civilian were halted until Afghan civilians can be cleared from

Media Minister and Cabinet

Spokesman Keheliya Ram-

bukwella will be the new

Health Minister, according

to a statement issued by the

Presidential Media Division.

Education Minister G.L.

Peiris and Foreign Minister

Dinesh Gunawardena will

swap roles. Mr. Peiris re-

turns to the Foreign Minis-

try after six years. He held

the post during former Pre-

sident Mahinda Rajapaksa's

second term in office from

2010 to 2015, when Sri Lan-

ka was under heightened in-

ternational scrutiny over al-

leged war crimes. His

appointment comes at a

time when Sri Lanka faces

pressure at the UN Human

Rights Council over its rights

record and promises on

post-war reconciliation, also

cited by the European Par-

liament in June, while re-

commending a temporary

withdrawal of the GSP+ sta-

In Monday's reshuffle,

President Gotabaya Raja-

paksa's nephew Namal Raja-

paksa has been awarded a

new cabinet portfolio - De-

velopment Planning and

Monitoring.

tus given to Sri Lanka.

Amid virus surge, Lankan

Health Minister replaced

Keheliya Rambukwella to take charge

the runway, Mr. Kirby added. Late Monday night, hundreds of people remained trapped between American forces trying to push them out of the airport and Taliban forces trying to keep them in, witnesses said. An Associated Press journalist also saw what appeared to be an airstrike target two vehi-

cles near the airport. Shafi Arifi, who had a ticket to travel to Uzbekistan on Sunday, was unable to board his plane because it was packed with people who had raced across the tarmac and climbed aboard, with no police or airport staff in sight.

"There was no room for us to stand," said the 24-yearold. "Children were crying, women were shouting, young and old men were so angry and upset, no one could hear each other. There was no oxygen to breathe."

Ranni - Perunad Grama Panchayath - Providing FHTCs from Ongoing Schemes (Phase III - Part II)EMD : Rs. 100000. Tender fee : Rs. 11200

KERALA WATER AUTHORITY

Website: www.kwa.kerala.gov.in www.etenders.kerala.gov.in KWA-JB-GL-6-314-2021-22

Tender No: 09/2021-2022/KWA/ PHC/TVLA(Rt-1). JJM (2020-21)

Last Date for submitting Tender: 03-09-2021 02:00:pm Phone: 04692600162

	TENDER NOTICE
Tender No	Infopark/e-Tender/011/202

Infopark/e-Tender/011/2021 Selection of Architect for designing of Name of work exteriors, walkways and landscaping including PMC services at Infopark Kochi

Tender available for download from: 17th August 2021

Last Date of Submission of bid: 16th September 2021

For Details, visit www.etenders.kerala.gov.in Phone No 0484 2415217/18/31/32



Sd/- Chief Executive Officer, Infopark, Kochi -682042 RO/01337/D3/2021/I&PRD



CHENNAI METRO RAIL LIMITED

NIT No: CMRL/CON/PHASE-II/CORR-3&5/CP19/HH RAILS/2021 E-procurement

-TENDER NO: PHASE-II/CORR-3&5/CP19/HH RAILS/2021 CMRL invites online tender through e-procurement bids for the Tender No- CMRL/CON/PHASE-II/CORR-3&5/CP19/HH RAILS/2021(under JICA loan agreement ID-P272) - "SUPPLY OF 60E1 PROFILE, 1080 GRADE (HEAD HARDENED) RAILS CONFORMING TO IRS T-12-2009 (WITH LATEST AMENDMENTS FOR CMRL PHASE-II PROJECT FOR CORRIDOR 3&5.".-Tender Documents

For further details, please visit e-procurement website: http://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app www.chennaimetrorail.org

can be downloaded from E-procurement website.

DIPR/ 2423 /TENDER/2021 Director (Projects) ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER) (K.G. Mishra) EE(E&M)WTP-Nangloi कार्यालय अतिरिक्त मुख्य अभियंता, जन स्वास्थ्य अभियांत्रिकी विभाग, क्षेत्र-द्वितीय, जोधपुर Tel: 0291-2650730, Email: ace2jodhpur@gmail.com

दिनांकः 03.08.2021

/2021-22/3754-80

बिड आमंत्रण सूचना (NIB) संख्या 66 से 71/ 2021-22 राजस्थान के राज्यपाल की ओर से निम्नलिखित कार्यों हेतु लोक निर्माण और वितीय नियम के पार्ट-4 नियम 334 (ए) (iii) के तहत । 50.00 लाख तक की निविदाओं हेतु केवल जन स्वास्थ्य अभियांत्रिकी विभाग में पंजीकृत एवं इससे अधिक लागत की निविदाओं हेतु जन स्वास्थ अभियांत्रिकी विभाग में पंजीकृत निविदादाताओं हेतु नियमानुसार छूट के साथ एवं केन्द्र/ राज्य सरकार के अधिकृत विभागो/ संगठनों, केन्द्रिय लोक नर्माण विभाग, रेल, डाक, दूरसंचार विभागों में उपयुक्त समकक्ष श्रेणी में पंजीकृत संवेदकों से पूर्ण धरोहर राशि के साथ ई-टेण्डरिंग प्रक्रिया द्वारा निम्

ऑन लाईन बिड आमंत्रित की जाती है:-कार्य पूर्ण करने की इं-प्रक्रिया UBIN No. अनुमानित धरोहर राशि (लाख रु.) अवधि (लाखों में 2 प्रतिशत 66/2021-22 PHE2122 5000/-1000/-6 माह 402.46 804920/ 67/2021-22 PHE2122 303.35 606700/-5000/-6 माह 68/2021-22 PHE2122 266.74 533480/ 5000/-1000/-6 माह 69/2021-22 PHE2122 277.50 555000/-5000/-1000/-6 माह 70/2021-22 PHE2122 255.82 511640/ 5000/-1000/-6 माह 71/2021-22 PHE2122 5000/-6 माह ऑनलाईन बिंड उपलब्ध होने की तिथि 04/08/2021

ऑनलाईन बिड डाउनलोड/ अपलोड करने की अन्तिम तिथि 25/08/2021 को 6.00 पी.एम. ऑनलाईन बिड खोलने की तिथि 26/08/2021 को 2.00 पी. एम. बिड से संबंधित समस्त विवरण वैबसाईट www.dipronline.org, sppp.raj.nic.in व www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in पर देख (विजेन्द्र सिंह राठौड़)

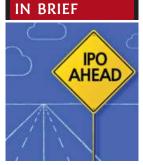
अतिरिक्त मुख्य अभियंता DIPR/C/7866/2021 जन स्वा. अभि. विभाग, क्षेत्र द्वितीय जोधपुर

chilem.



Zambian business tycoon and opposition leader Hakainde Hichilema scored a landslide victory on Monday in bitterly-contested

presidential elections. Outgoing President leader Edgar Lungu on Monday conceded defeat and congratulated his successor and longtime rival Mr. Hi-



Latent View files papers for ₹600-crore IPO

Data analytics provider Latent View Analytics has filed preliminary papers with markets regulator SEBI to raise ₹600 crore via an initial public offering. The sale comprises fresh issue of equity shares worth ₹474 crore, and an offer-for-sale of equity shares of ₹126 crore by a promoter and existing shareholders, according to the draft red herring prospectus. Proceeds will be used for inorganic growth initiatives and investments in subsidiaries among others. PTI

Services platform myTVS raises ₹375 crore

myTVS, a digital platform for the automotive aftermarket, has raised ₹375 crore from a fund managed by Exor. The funds will be used to scale up, establish a pan-India platform and build its cloud-based digital infrastructure to become the largest B2C player in the automotive aftermarket, the company said in a statement. myTVS said it was also working on a 'Super app through which customers will have access to its range

CMS Info files with SEBI for ₹2,000-crore IPO

Cash management company CMS Info Systems has filed preliminary papers with markets regulator SEBI to mop up ₹2,000 crore through its initial share sale offering. The company's initial public offer is a pure offer-for-sale by promoter Sion Investment Holdings Pte Limited, an affiliate of Baring Private Equity Asia, as per the draft red herring prospectus (DRHP). Sion Investment, which acquired CMS in 2015, holds 100% stake in the company. PTI

Cryptocurrency Bill awaits Cabinet nod: FM

NEW DELHI Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday said she is awaiting an approval from the Cabinet on the Bill on cryptocurrency as the proposed legislation is before it. An inter-ministerial panel on cryptocurrency under the Chairmanship of Secretary (Economic Affairs) to study issues related to virtual currencies has recommended that all private cryptocurrencies, except any virtual currencies issued by State, will be

July WPI inflation slows slightly to 11.2%

Price gains in primary articles, food and fuel and power moderate, manufactured products see uptick

Inflation in wholesale prices slowed marginally to 11.2% in July, from June's 12.1%, with the pace of price gains in primary articles, food as well as fuel and power moderating. Manufactured product prices, on the other hand, momentum last gained month.

On a month-on-month basis, the Wholesale Price Index (WPI), however, increased 0.6% in July from

Inflation in fuel and power at the wholesale level was at 26% in July, slowing from 36.7% in May and 32.8% in June, while manufactured products inflation accelerated from 10.9% in June to 11.2% in July. The Food Index saw 4.46% inflation compared with 6.66% in June.



Better supply: Supply-side measures helped keep the primary food index flat, says ICRA's Nayar. • SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAF

"The high rate of inflation in July 2021 is primarily due to low base effect and rise in prices of crude petroleum & natural gas; mineral oils; manufactured products like basic metals; food products; textiles; chemicals and chemical products as compared to the corresponding

month of the previous year," the office of the Economic Adviser in the Commerce and Industry Ministry said in a statement.

ICRA chief economist Aditi Nayar attributed the deceleration in WPI inflation for the second month in a row, from 13.1% in May, to a fa-

vourable base effect and a softening of food price pressures. The uncertainty related to the variant of thel coronavirus had arrested the rise in commodity prices, which had also helped, she added.

However, headline WPI inflation is expected to remain in double digits until October, giving little respite to the RBI's Monetary Policy Committee on the prices front, according to the economist.

'Focus on growth'

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that retail inflation was now well below the 6% ceiling for monetary policy and was expected to remain below it.

"I wouldn't allow it to worry me as I focus on growth, and we are constantly monitoring price trends and ensuring supply constraints are removed swiftly and if needed, import relaxations are being done so that the economy and consumers don't suffer over essential items," the minister said.

"Reflecting the base effect and the supply-side measures taken by the government related to pulses and oilseeds, the primary food index was flat at the year-ago level in July 2021, after having reported a year-on-year inflation for the previous five months," said Ms. Nayar.

"With rising tomato prices posing some concern, we expect the wholesale food index to record a mild inflation in August 2021, before slipping into disinflation for the next few prints, aided by the base effect," she noted. ICRA expects core-WPI inflation to have peaked at 10.8% in July, Ms. Nayar added.

August diesel demand nears pre-COVID level

Sales of fuel 8% short of 2019 period

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

India's recovery in demand for fuel continued in August as sales of diesel inched towards pre-COVID-19 levels on easing of pandemic-related restrictions, preliminary sales data showed on Monday. Petrol sales are already above pre-COVID levels while diesel is 8% short.

State-owned fuel retailers sold 0.98 million tonnes of petrol in the first half of August, 9.4% higher from a year earlier. Sales were 3.7% higher than pre-COVID petrol sales of 0.95 million tonnes in August 1-15, 2019.

Sales of diesel – the most used fuel in the country rose 18.5% to 2.11 million tonnes during August 1-15 over the previous year, but was 7.9% lower from August



consumption was 11% lower than pre-COVID levels. This is the third straight month that has seen a rise in consumption since March.

Fuel demand had recovered to near-normal levels in March before the onset of the second wave of CO-VID-19 infections led to the reimposition of lockdowns in different States, stalling mobility and muting economic activity.

Income tax portal to be fully functional in 2-3 days, says FM

Some issues remain, we are tracking progress: Sitharaman

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Monday that the new income tax portal would be fully functional in two to three days, with all the technical glitches marring the portal ironed out by the contractor Infosys.

Since its launch in early June, many critical functionalities of the tax portal have been non-starters, and the Minister admitted that there are 'still some issues' with it.

"Revenue Secretary [Tarun Bajaj] has been neutrally monitoring the progress on fixing the portal on a weekly



Nirmala Sitharaman

basis. Nandan Nilekani [Infosys co-founder and chairman] keeps sending me messages saying: 'This is where we are at', 'I assure you..' and 'we will sort it out.' Hopefully, in another twothree days, it should be com-

plete," Ms. Sitharaman said, stressing that she had been pushing Infosys 'not to let the taxpayers down' with constant reminders.

Asked about talks with Cairn over settling the retrospective tax dispute, she said the Finance Ministry is in the final stages of notifying the rules related to the taxation law amendment to scrap the retrospective tax clause. "The critical features are already mentioned in the amendments, but the rules are yet to be notified," she said, indicating that Cairn may only be expected to take a call on settling the dis-

'Businesses see activity rise for a second week'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Business activity rose for the second consecutive week, crossing the prepandemic level for the first time since the onset of the COVID-19 disruption in March 2020, a Japanese

The Nomura India Business Resumption Index rose to 101.2 for the week ended August 15, from 99.6 last week. "The recovery from the second wave has been very swift: it took the NIBRI nearly 10 months to crawl back towards the 100 mark after the first wave of COVID-19, but less than three months to cross 100 after the second wave," the

MUMBAI

brokerage said on Monday.

brokerage said.

China economy stalls as factory output, retail sales growth slow

'Recovery uneven on sporadic COVID outbreaks, weather'

China's factory output and retail sales growth slowed sharply and missed expectations in July, as new CO-VID-19 outbreaks and floods disrupted business operations, adding to signs the economic recovery is losing momentum

Industrial production in the world's second-largest economy increased 6.4% year-on-year in July, data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) showed on Monday. Analysts had expected output to rise 7.8% after growing 8.3% in June.



8.5% in July from a year earlier, far lower than the forecast 11.5% rise and June's 12.1% uptick. China's economy has rebounded to its prepandemic growth levels, but the expansion is losing steam as businesses grapple with higher costs and supply bottlenecks. New COVID-19

infections in July also led to fresh restrictions, disrupting the country's factory output already hit by severe weather this summer.

Asian share markets slipped on Monday after the data showed a surprisingly sharp slowdown in the engine of global growth.

Fu Linghui, an NBS spokesperson, said at a briefing on Monday that China's recovery remains uneven due to sporadic COVID-19 outbreaks and natural disasters.

"The domestic economic recovery still faces many challenges, and constraints on production increased," said Mr. Fu.

'PE/VC stakes

touch all-time

Adani arm to buy checkpost firm MBCPNL

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Adani Road Transport Ltd.. a wholly owned subsidiary oi Adani Enterprises Ltd., has agreed to acquire Maharashtra Border Check Post Network Ltd. (MBCPNL) at an enterprise value of ₹1,680 crore, the Adani group said in a statement.

A subsidiary of Sadbhav Infrastructure Project Ltd., MBCPNL is a portfolio of 24 border checkposts with exclusive service fee collection rights from commercial vehicles for all routes in and out of Maharashtra until at least 2033. The move offers access to routes that link Maharashtra with 6 States covering more than 20% of India's commercial road traffic.

The Adani group said ARTL would acquire 49% in MBCPNL, with an option to buy additional stakes.

Increase in tariff key to sector revival: VIL CEO

Analysts air concerns over telco's vitals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Amid an existential struggle, Vodafone Idea on Monday said while its recent tariff tweaks were steps in the right direction, such changes were not enough to solve the industry's structural issues, and tariff increases and floor pricing remained key to the sector's revival.

Speaking during an earnings call, the firm's CEO Ravinder Takkar said although Kumar Mangalam Birla had stepped down as chairman of Vodafone Idea, "he as well as Aditya Birla Group and the Vodafone group are committing to providing support and guidance to the company, in line with the stated positions of both the groups".

The crisis-hit telco's Q1 earnings announced on Saturday left analysts disap-

pointed. A Goldman Sachs note cautioned that the company has large repayments due starting December, and at the current EBIT-(earnings interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortisation) runrate, Vodafone Idea could have a ₹23,800-crore cash shortfall until April 2022. The total gross debt (excluding lease liabilities and including interest accrued but not due) as of June 30 stood

at ₹1,91,590 crore. ICICI Securities said it saw "high risk and huge concern for VIL" and in the wake of growing uncertainties, it has put VIL's estimates, rating and target price under review until further clarity. The risk-reward is "unfavourable" given limited clarity on tariff hike and funding, BofA Securities said in its report.

HDFC unveils 'Green & Sustainable' FD

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Leading mortgage lender HDFC has announced the introduction of 'Green & Sustainable Deposits' to safeguard the environment from climate change.

These fixed deposits will be directed towards financing green and sustainable housing credit solutions and services, HDFC said.

With a deposit period of 36-120 months, both residents and NRIs can invest in this instrument that will offer interest rates up to 6.55% p.a. "Senior citizens will be eligible for an additional 0.25% p.a. on deposits up to ₹2 crore. Additional ROI of 0.10% p.a. will be applicable on these deposits up to ₹50 lakh per calendar month per customer if placed/renewed through our online platform," the lender added.

Demand for cans in packing

rising: Ball Beverage Packaging

'Aluminium cans better for environment than plastic, glass'

threefold in April-July

'Stimulus in U.S., restocking helped'

Jewellery exports rose

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Exports of gems and jewellery from India grew more than threefold to \$12,549.92 million between April and July, from \$3,875.04 million a vear earlier.

"Exports growth is major-

ly attributed to the renewed consumer sentiment especially in U.S.A. with the recent announcement of the COVID-19 stimulus package of \$1.9 trillion to speed up recovery from the economic and health effects of the pandemic," said Colin Shah, chairman, Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council.

With the continued recovery in global markets, rise in disposable incomes of consumers, forthcoming festive season in domestic and international markets, we are expecting exports to grow further in the coming



months," he added. Cut and polished diamond exports have grown more than threefold to \$8,522.34 million in the period.

"Continued recovery in key export markets like U.S.A., China and Hong Kong as well as restocking of inventory have been the major reasons for the positive export growth of diamonds," Mr. Shah said. Plain gold jewellery exports rose more than 7-fold to \$858.83 million. Silver jewellery exports grew 66% to \$843.04 million...

high of \$9.5 bn' PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Investments by private equity and venture capital funds doubled to a record high of \$9.5 billion in July mainly driven by higher investor interest in the ecommerce sector, a report said on Monday.

Private equity (PE) and venture capital (VC) investments stood at \$4.1 billion in the year-earlier period.

The activity was higher by 77% when compared with June's \$5.4 billion, the report on monthly PE/VC investment activity by industry lobby IVCA and con-

sultancy firm EY said. The month recorded 19 large deals of more than \$100 million aggregating to \$8.2 billion, compared with 10 large deals worth \$3.1 billion in the year-earlier period and 12 worth \$3.6 billion in June 2021.

Allow duty-free import of natural rubber: ATMA

'Shortage hits local tyre manufacturing'

The Automotive Tyre Manufacturers Association (AT-MA) on Monday urged the government to allow dutyfree import of natural rubber as shortage of the commodity in India has become a major deterrent for the tyre industry to support domestic manufacturing.

According to the tyre industry body, natural rubber consumption is expected to increase further and the annual demand is expected to cross 13 lakh tonnes this

"With the production of 7,90,000 tonnes as projected [in normal scenario] by Rubber Board, natural rubber imports to the tune of at least 5 lakh tonnes are a must," ATMA said in a state-



ment. The tyre industry accounts for more than 70% of natural rubber consumed in the country, the association

While the Rubber Board had projected much higher production figures for the ongoing fiscal, the tyre industry body claimed that "the ground realities are not in line with the Rubber Board's guidance as market arrivals of sheet rubber have dried thin".



Pointing out that per capita can consumption in India is one per annum while it is 70 in Vietnam and about 40 in China, he said consumer behaviour and safety concerns in the wake of the pandemic were fuelling demand

for aluminium cans in India. Ball Beverage Packaging India is a unit of American multinational Ball Corporation and supplies aluminium cans for FMCG, soft drink and beer firms. "There is increased awareness around how plastic packaging is adversely affecting marine life, polluting the rivers and oceans and ending up as non-degradable heaps of waste at landfills. More Indians are buying items based on social responsibility, inclusiveness and environmental impact," he added. "COVID-19 has raised con-

sumer awareness and commitment to buying sustainable products," he added. To cater to growing de-

mand, Bell is expanding its packaging offering to other segments such as sparkling water, wine and alcoholic drinks such as whiskey, rum and vodka. "Alcohol in 180 ml cans was recently introduced in Rajasthan [by a prominent spirits company]. We are looking to expand that into other States," Mr. Lahoti said. "We have also worked on our technology around coatings inside the cans to enable us to package wine," he said, adding that two firms had introduced wine in cans in India and for exports. On a per-litre basis, emis-

sions related to transporting and cooling aluminium cans are 7-21% lower than for plastic bottles and 35-49% lower than for glass bottles, depending on the size of the comparative bottles as well as the types of refrigerators, in which the beverage is cooled prior to consumption, company data showed.

'Purified drinking water supply via tankers taxable'

Composite supply, attracts 18%: AAR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Supply of drinking water to the public through mobile tankers or dispensers by a charitable organisation is taxable at 18% under the

GST, AAR has ruled. The Andhra Pradesh bench of the Authority for Advance Ruling (AAR) has ruled - in the case of Vijayavahini Charitable Foundation – that since the organisation is supplying purified water, hence it is not fit for

GST exemption. The Foundation had sought an advance ruling on whether the supply of groundwater after undertaking purification through reverse osmosis to the general public either through the dispensing unit, or mobile tanker, at a concession-



Goods and Services Tax (GST). The AAR said the principal supply undertaken by the organisation is a supply of purified water, which is taxable at 18%, while the service of distribution through mobile units is an ancillary service and taxable at 18%. "It is invariably a composite supply and the rate of tax of purified water prevails, being the principal supply," the AAR noted.



prohibited in India. PTI

Indian pacers pull off famous win after Shami-Bumrah show with bat

England's line-up comes a cropper in the face of quality attack and mounting pressure; visitors emerge victorious by a thumping 151-run margin

INDIA IN ENG

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

India's world-class pace attack pulled off an incredible heist with the bat and then a magnificent performance with the ball to decimate England by 151 runs in the second Test here on Monday.

The fifth day at the hallowed Lord's was a fabulous exhibition of Test cricket, with India bowling out England for 120 as the home team tried to bat it out without going for a chase of 272 in 60 overs.

Mohammed Shami (56 n.o. & 1/13) and Jasprit Bumrah (34 n.o. & 3/33) played innings of their lives and then rocked the England top-order, before Ishant Sharma (2/13) and Mohammed Siraj (4/32) played their part to perfection to give the visitors a 1-0 lead in the five-match series.

Third win at Lord's

This is India's third Test match win at Lord's having won earlier in 1986 and 2014 series and it has now six points in the World Test Championship.

First Shami and Bumrah achieved the unthinkable of batting England out of the contest by conjuring a record stand of 89 which took team's total to 298 for 8 and made the target of 272 in two look sessions fairly impossible.

Shami and Bumrah's special effort with the bat was duly applauded by the fellow-teammates who came downstairs from the dressing room to welcome the

With the ball, they both were joined by Ishant as they had a serious shot at a memorable win after Joe Root's (33) dismissal by Bumrah



Closing in: Indian players converge to congratulate Mohammed Siraj after the fall of Jos Buttler's wicket, the ninth of the innings. • AP

had England on the mat at 67/5 just after tea.

Before that Shami had bowled a leg-cutter for keeps to get Dom Sibley (0) and Bumrah had forced Rory Burns (0) to close his bat for a catch at short mid-off.

Let-off

It could have been six down soon had Virat Kohli held onto the catch provided by Jos Buttler at first sip but it evaded his reverse-cupped palms and Moeen Ali's edge didn't matter as Ravindra Jadeja over-stepped.

But then Siraj bowled couple of superb successive outgoing deliveries to get Moeen (13) and Sam Curran (0) to make it 90/7 before picking up the final wicket of James Anderson.

Earlier, from a situation where a defeat looked imminent after Rishabh Pant's (22) early dismissal, Shami

and Bumrah displayed never-seen-before resolve, with Ishant (16) also making a nice little contribution.

The tail-enders among themselves accumulated 106 runs, something that India has been missing before the start of the series.

At the beginning of the fifth day, Pant charged down the track to smash James Anderson through the covers but Ollie Robinson bowled a beautiful delivery that moved late to induce an outside edge into the keeper's

However once Nos. 9 and 10 were at the crease, Root decided to spread the field anticipating a lot of aerial shots from the duo but to his horror and Indian dressing room's surprise, both were ready to put their heads down and play proper cricketing shots.

They were peppered with

also got hit on the helmet by Mark Wood but he manfully carried on concentrating even more

a few short balls and Bumrah

Sam Curran bagged the first-ever King pair at Lord's

■ That was two-in-two for Siraj for a second time in the match

SCOREBOARD

INDIA - 1st INNINGS 364 in 126.1 overs **ENGLAND - 1st INNINGS** 391 in 128 overs

INDIA - 2nd INNINGS K.L. Rahul c Buttler b Wood 5 (30b), Rohit Sharma c Mooen b

Wood 21 (36b, 2x4, 1x6), Cheteshwar Pujara c Root b Wood 45 (206b, 4x4), Virat Kohli c Buttler b Curran 20 (31b, 4x4), Aiinkva Rahane c Buttler b Moeen 61 (146b, 5x4), Rishabh Pant c Buttler b Robinson 22 (46b, 1x4), Ravindra Jadeja b Moeen 3 (5b), Ishant Sharma lbw b Robinson 16 (24b, 2x4), Mohammed Shami (not out) 56 (70b, 6x4, 1x6), Jasprit Bumrah (not out) 34 (64b, 3x4); Extras (b-2, lb-12, nb-1): 15; Total (for eight wkts. decl., in 109.3 ov-

FALL OF WICKETS

1-18 (Rahul, 9.2 overs), 2-27 (Rohit, 11.6), 3-55 (Kohli, 23.1), 4-155 (Pujara, 72.4), 5-167 (Rahane, 75.6), 6-175 (Jadeja, 79.1), 7-194 (Pant, 85.3), 8-209 (Ishant, 89.3).

ENGLAND BOWLING Anderson 25.3-6-53-0; Robin-

son 17-6-45-2; Wood 18-4-51-3; Curran 18-3-42-1; Moeen 26-1-84-2; Root 5-0-9-0.

ENGLAND — 2nd INNINGS

Rory Burns c Siraj b Bumrah O (4b), Dom Sibley c Pant b Shami O (4b), Haseeb Hameed lbw b Ishant 9 (45b), Joe Root c Kohli b Bumrah 33 (*60b*, *5x4*), Jonny Bairstow lbw b Ishant 2 (24b), Jos Buttler c Pant b Siraj 25 (96b, 3x4), Moeen Ali c Kohli b Siraj 13 (42b, 2x4), Sam Curran c Pant b Siraj O (1), Ollie Robinson

lbw b Bumrah 9 (35b), Mark Wood (not out) O (1h), James Anderson b Siraj O (3b); Extras (b-17, lb-7, nb-4, w-1): 29; Total (in 51.5 overs): 120. **FALL OF WICKETS**

1-1 (Burns, 0.3), 2-1 (Sibley, 1.4), 3-44 (Hameed, 15.3), 4-67 (Bairstow, 21.6), 5-67 (Root, 22.3), 6-90 (Moeen, 38.1), 7-90 (Curran, 38.2), 8-120 (Robinson, 50.5), 9-120 (Buttler 51.2).

INDIA BOWLING

Bumrah 15-3-33-3, Shami 10-5-13-1, Jadeja 6-3-5-0, Siraj 10.5-3-32-4, Ishant 10-3-13-2.

Man-of-the-match: K.L. Rahul. India won by 151 runs to take

a 1-0 lead in the five-match

Third Test: August 25-29 at

On-field tension helped our bowlers, says Kohli

Just got a few things wrong: Root

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

India captain Virat Kohli said that the verbal altercation between England players and the two Indian tail-enders Mohammed Shami and Jasprit Bumrah spurred them to go flat out at the home team.

"Super proud of the whole team. The way we stuck to our plans after being put in. The pitch didn't offer much on the first three days. First day was the most challenging," said Kohli at the presentation.

"The way we played in the second innings after being put under pressure -Jasprit and Shami were outstanding. We had the belief we can get them out in 60 overs. The tension in the field in our second innings, what happened there, helped us," said Kohli.

"Putting their hand up was something we were really proud of and we wanted to let them know (standing ovation for Bumrah-Shami). Batting coach has worked really hard with the

They have the desire in them to do well for the team. We know how priceless those runs are. The belief (from lower-order) was missing for a while but now it is back," said Kohli.

"Have been a part of the winning Test last time under MS (Dhoni). That was pretty special. But this one, to get a result in 60 overs is quite special. Especially with someone like Siraj playing for the first time at Lord's and he bowled superbly," he

England skipper Joe Root admitted they got their tactics wrong when Shami and Bumrah were batting. "We went from a very strong position where we looked like we would win the game than lose. More than anything, just got a few things wrong. That partnership, they did pretty well. But lots of things I'd do differently if given an opportunity."





Great efforts: Siraj picks up a memento and Shami celebrates

Rashid Khan worried about his family, says Pietersen

AFGHAN CRISIS

AGENCIES

Former England skipper Kevin Pietersen has revealed that Afghanistan leg-spinner Rashid Khan is worried about the situation back home and is not able to get his family out of the country because flight operations have been affected due to the ongoing turmoil in the country. Rashid is currently in the UK playing for Trent Rockets in the inaugural edition of the Hundred.

"There's a lot of things that are happening at home. We had a long chat



here on the boundary talking about it and he's worried: he can't get his family out of Afghanistan and there's a lot of things happening for him," Pietersen said on Sky

"For him to turn up and put on a performance like this under the pressure that he is currently under...for him to be able to forget that stuff and navigate his story and continue the momentum that he has - 1 think that's probably one of the most heart-warming stories of this Hundred so far," added Pietersen.

ACB chief's assurance Meanwhile, the Afghanistan Cricket Board CEO Hamid Shinwari assured that the game will not be a casualty in the wake of drastic political change, saying the Taliban "love" and "support" the game.



after the narrow victory in the first Test. • AFP

Windies clinch a thriller

PAKISTAN IN WI

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

West Indies scrambled to a pulsating one-wicket victory over Pakistan on Sunday as the visitors self-destructed in the final session of the fourth day when on course to take the first Test of the twomatch series at Sabina Park

Defending a modest target of 168 after being dismissed in the morning session for 203, Shaheen Shah Afridi led the attack with figures of four for 50 in reducing the home side to 114 for seven at tea with only wicketkeeperbatsman Joshua da Silva and the tailenders left.

However, in scenes reminiscent of a similar one-wicket loss in the deciding Test of the 2000 series in Antigua, the Pakistanis lost the discipline in their bowling and composure in the field.

Three catches were missed to allow Kemar Roach and last man Jayden Seales to take their team to the target with a last-wicket partner- the second innings

Roach, who was dropped twice, hit the winning runs off Hasan Ali to finish unbeaten on 30. Seales was named man-of-the-match for his match haul of eight for 125 which included five for 55 in

SCOREBOARD

Pakistan - 1st innings: 217. West Indies - 1st innings: 253. Pakistan - 2nd innings: 203. West Indies – 2nd innings: Kraigg Brathwaite c Rizwan b Shaheen Afridi 2, Kieran Powell lbw b Shaheen Afridi 4, Nkrumah Bonner b Shaheen Afridi 5, Roston Chase c Butt b Faheem Ashraf 22, Jermaine Blackwood c Butt b Hasan Ali 55, Kyle Mayers c Butt b Faheem Ashraf O, Jason Holder b Hasan Ali 16, Joshua da Silva c Rizwan b Shaheen Afridi 13, Ke-

mar Roach (not out) 30, Jomel

Warrican c Rizwan b Hasan Ali 6, Jayden Seales (not out) 2; Extras (b-2, lb-10, nb-1): 13: Total (for nine wkts. in 56.5 overs): Fall of wickets: 1-4, 2-15, 3-16,

4-84, 5-92, 6-111, 7-114, 8-142,

Pakistan bowling: Mohammad Abbas 12-5-27-0, Shaheen Shah Afridi 17-4-50-4, Hasan Ali 16.5-5-37-3, Faheem Ashraf 8-1-29-2, Yasir Shah 3-0-13-0. Man-of-the-Match: Seales.

West Indies won by one

T20 World Cup schedule today

The ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2021 schedule will be announced at a digital show on Tuesday, ICC has said. The World Cup is scheduled to be held between Oct. 17 and Nov. 14 in Oman and UAE

Isa Guha will be joined by Daren Sammy and Dinesh Karthik on the digital show to preview the megaevent on T20worldcup.com and the ICC Cricket app from 9 a.m. Dubai time on August 17.

All three stars have been part of the T20 World Cupwinning teams in the past - Karthik in 2007 with India, Guha in 2009 with England and Daren Sammy twice as captain with West Indies in 2012 and 2016.

"Karthik said, "the schedule announcement takes us one step closer to the ICC Men's T20 World Cup and is the point from where teams start chalking

out their final plans."

Push to prepare for Paris reason for success Sanjeeva Singh says sports science support crucial for continued good show

ARCHERY

Y.B. SARANGI

KOLKATA The initiative to prepare youngsters for the 2024 Paris Olympics is the primary reason behind the Indian archers' unprecedented success in the World Youth archery championships in Poland, says high performance director Sanjeeva Singh.

The Indian archers claimed 15 medals, including eight gold, to record the country's best-ever showing.

Sanjeeva said comprehensive sports science support for the archers was crucial. "They trained with heart rate monitoring devices and practised breathing techniques to shoot with more control. We focused on finishing," said Sanjeeva, an Arjuna and Dronacharya awardee, from Poland.

He said the young archers, who shot at 60 to 70% of their ability, needed to raise their level over the next

"The change in selection

process, giving priority to archers doing well in oneon-one matches, was important. Talented young archers should get more opportunities. We are sending several juniors to the upcoming World Championships next month."

Purnima Mahato, a senior coach accompanying the archers, said it was good exposure. "We have got good archers in cadet and junior levels. They shot with confidence and learnt how to handle pressure," said Purnima.

Komalika Bari, who had claimed the World cadet title in 2019, took the World recurve junior women's individual crown this time to become the second Indian after Deepika Kumari to win both the gold medals.

Bigger goals

Komalika, who bagged the junior mixed team title with Parth Salunkhe, looked at bigger goals. "I was well prepared, mentally and gamewise. The international exposure at the senior level during training made a difference," said Komalika.

The youngster, who was part of two World Cup gold medal-winning teams this year, said the failure to make it to the Olympics hurt. "The pain remains, but I have to learn from the mistakes and

improve," said Komalika. Salunkhe, who also contributed to the junior men's team's gold medal victory, was delighted to prove his "The preparation worth. helped. Good to win gold medals at this level," said Sa-



Reaping it rich: The Indian contingent that won 15 medals, including eight gold, to record the country's best-ever showing in the World Youth championships. • TWITTER

WTT Contender begins in Budapest today



TABLE TENNIS

SPORTS BUREAU BUDAPEST

> Indian paddlers will have a taste of international competition post the Tokyo Olympics when the main draw of the World Table Tennis (WTT) Contender Budapest begins here on Tuesday.

First time in Europe

This is the first WTT event to be held in Europe. A. Sharath Kamal has opted to skip the tournament. G. Sathiyan and Manika Batra, seeded fourth and sixth in the men's and women's singles respectively, will be hoping to have a good tournament.



G. Sathiyan. ■ REUTERS

Sathiyan will play France's Can Akkuzu in the first round while Manika meets Sabine Winter of Germany.

In mixed doubles, Sathiyan and Manika will take on Archana Kamath and Manav Thakkar in the first round.

The third-seeded duo of Harmeet Desai & Manav, and Sanil Shetty & S. Snehit will feature in men's doubles. Other Indians in singles' main draw are Harmeet and Manav in men's and Archana in women's.

The top seeds

England's Liam Pitchford is the top seed in men's singles, while Monaco's Xiaoxin Yang gets the pride of place among the women.

Keymer takes title

RAKESH RAO

Leon Mendonca ended his poor campaign in 15th place in the 16-player Kramnik Challenge online rapid tournament on chess Sunday.

In the three rounds on the final day, Mendonca lost to eventual champion Germany's Vincent Keymer, USA's Balaji Daggupati and drew with China's Zhu Jiner to finish with five points from 15 rounds.

In the two previous legs of the Challengers Tour, R. Praggnanandhaa and D. Gukesh had emerged champions. In a thrilling finish,

Keymer overtook overnight leader Awonder Liang by inflicting a defeat in the 14th round. This meant Keymer needed a draw in the final round to stay ahead of Awonder in case of a tie on 11.5 points. Keymer fought back twice to hold Kazakhstan's Dinara Saduakassova and take the title. Keymer now gets to play in an event on the elite Meltwaters Champions Chess Tour.



Shubhankar records second top-10 of season

Shubhankar Sharma finished a creditable tied ninth (11-under total), only his second top-10 outing of the year, at the Cazoo Classic golf tournament here on Sunday. Scotsman Calum Hill claimed his maiden European Tour title carding a five-under final round 67 for a 16-under



Kusal Perera tests COVID-19 positive

Sri Lanka's

wicketkeeper-batsman Kusal Perera has tested positive for COVID-19, its cricket Board said on Monday. Perera, who turns 31 on Tuesday, missed the recent home series against India because of

Tvesa finishes T-67; O'Toole is champion

DUMBARNIE LINKS (SCOTLAND) Tvesa Malik's final round of 75 at the Trust Golf Women's Scottish Open saw her finish tied 67th on Sunday. Tvesa finished at nine-over. American Ryann O'Toole won the first title of her career with a 17-under total, PTI



Lahiri finishes 46th, retains PGA card

GREENSBORG Anirban Lahiri survived some tense moments to end the Wyndham Championship with an even par 70. Lahiri's tied 46th placing earned him the 121st spot on the FedEx Cup standings, which ensured his playing rights for the 2021-22 season, beginning in September. Kevin Kisner of the US won a six-man play-off for the title. PTI

Surender Reddy elected chairperson of HRC

R. Surender Reddy was unanimously elected Chairperson of the Hyderabad Race Club (HRC) at the Golden Jubilee 50th annual general meeting of the club on Monday. Messrs V. Krishna Das, Col. S.B. Nair, N. Venkatram Narasimha Reddy. and Hari Kishen Gupta were elected to the board of Stewards and Directors

Iran's athletes could soon be competing in **Indian meets**

STAN RAYAN

Iran's former Olympic discus throw silver medallist Ehsan Hadadi, the Asian Games champion, and former Asian 100m champion Hassan Taftian could soon be competing in athletics meets in India.

The Athletics Federation of India and the Athletics Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran have signed a cooperation agreement to support each other. The agreement will see athletes from both countries compete in each other's National championships across all age-groups. The two federations are also looking at the possibility of holding joint camps and also upgrading knowledge of coaches through courses country.

"We have always helped one another in all situations in keeping with the excellent relationships between the two countries," said AFI president Adille Sumariwalla and AFIRI president Hashem Siami in a joint release.

No Messi, no problem for Barca

Catalans see off a spirited Real Sociedad in their season opener

EURO LEAGUES

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Barcelona started life without Lionel Messi by defeating Real Sociedad 4-2 in its LaLiga opener at the Camp Nou on Sunday even if fans admitted it felt like "a leap into the unknown".

Captain Gerard Pique gave it a 19th minute lead with his 50th goal for the

Martin Braithwaite found the net in first half injury time and in the 59th minute. Sergi Roberto added a fourth in the last minute of the

Just over 20,000 fans were in attendance as crowds returned for the first time since the pandemic.

Brief comeback

However, they had to hold their breath at one stage when Sociedad came back from 3-0 down to get to 3-2 thanks to goals from 20-yearold Julen Lobete in the 82nd minute and a 30-metre freekick from skipper Mikel Oyarzabal three minutes

Six-time Ballon d'Or winner Messi called time on his two-decade career at Barcelona last week and moved to Paris Saint-Germain.

Messi's memory lingered heavy over the Camp Nou on Sunday despite the removal of a giant photograph of the Argentine superstar from the entrance in the wake of his move to France.

Venting their anger

Some banners were in place well before kick-off venting the fans anger towards president Joan Laporta.

One read "Laporta, Barca is not your business", while

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The selected names of In-

dian senior men's national

lootball squad assembled for

a preparatory camp in the ci-

ty on Monday after a fairly

creditable showing in the

2022 World Cup / 2023 Asian

Cup qualifiers in Doha in

June. The present camp has

been called to prepare the

Indian team for two interna-

tional friendlies against Ne-

pal in the first week of Sep-

This will be an important

outing for the National side

ahead of the SAFF Cham-

pionship, which after multi-

ple postponements is now

scheduled to be played in

the first week of October in

Maldives. The All India Foot-

ball Federation had devised

the calendar for the remain-

der part of the season to lay

out a robust engagement for

the senior national team un-

tember.



Rising tall: Gerard Pique, second right, beats the Soceidad defence to head home Barcelona's

another proclaimed "Barca yes, Laporta no!"

"It was a big emotional blow," said 23-year-old Barca fan Adria De Lucas.

"I was in my room when I saw the news. I started sending messages to all my friends, and no one believed it. It was emotionally hard."

Leap into unknown The supporter added: "It's a leap into the unknown (without Messi). We will see what happens."

Inside the Camp Nou, fans made the most of their return after 18 months, chanting "Messi! Messi!".

Banners expressed their "eternal gratitude".

The supporters are with us, they want to see football," said Pique.

"We knew they were going to react that way. We all know what Leo represents, but everything changes and we have to keep going.

football camp gets underway

der its head coach Igor Sti-

mac, who recently earned a

efforts in laving out a robust

engagement for our Senior

National team despite the

ongoing pandemic situation

and the different quarantine

rules in different countries.

India will play six interna-

tional matches in the second

half of 2021, and a possible

seventh if we progress to the

SAFF championship final,"

said Kushal Das, the AIFF

general secretary, in a

The preparatory camp in

Kolkata, which is happening

in the city after a break of 15

years, will be taking place

under a secure bio bubble

environment adhering to

the parameters laid out in

the current pandemic situa-

practice grounds developed

The international class

statement.

Team to take on Nepal in two friendlies in September

contract extension.

Senior men's National

"We will be very competitive and we will fight for titles to the end. We will not have his talent, but we have proven that we can all play

LaLiga champion Atletico Madrid got its season underway with a 2-1 win at Celta

Angel Correa gave Atletico the lead after 23 minutes after being set up by Thomas

Correa added a second goal in the 64th minute just five minutes after Iago Aspas had pulled Celta level from the penalty spot.

Mass brawl

However, the game was marred by a mass brawl in the closing stages following a foul on Atletico striker Luis

Red cards were brandished for Hugo Mallo of Celta and Mario Hermoso of

at the Salt Lake Stadium dur-

ing FIFA Under-17 World Cup

in 2017 will be used for train-

players and coaching staff

will be undergoing regular

COVID screening tests dur-

ing the camp, which will be

on for a little over two weeks

before the squad leaves for

The present 24 players for the

camp: Goalkeepers: Dheeraj

Singh Moirangthem, Vishal

Kaith; Defenders: Ashish Rai,

Bheke, Adil Khan, Chinglensana

Singh, Narender, Akash Mishra,

Mandar Rao Dessai; Midfiel-

ders: Bipin Singh, Brandon Fer-

nandes. Lalengmawia. Glan

Martins, Jeakson Singh, Pronav

Halder, Anirudh Thapa, Sahal

Abdul Samad, Yasir Mo-

hammed, Halicharan Narzary;

Forwards: Rahul KP Farukh

Choudhary, Ishan Pandita, Ra-

him Ali. (Players of BFC and

ATKMB will join the camp after

their AFC Cup engaments).

Fernandes, Rahul

Kathmandu.

"We have made our best ing. The entire contingent of

In Sunday's late game, Sevilla defeated Rayo Vallecano 3-0 with Moroccan international Youssef En-Nesvri scoring a first-half penalty before new Argentine recruit Erik Lamela grabbed two.

Vallecano played 75 minutes a man short after goalkeeper Luca Zidane, the son of French football legend Zinedine, was red-carded for bringing down Oussama Idrissi in the move which led to the penalty.

The results:

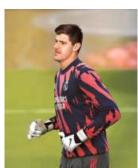
LaLiga: Celta Vigo 1 (Aspas 59pen) lost to Atletico Madrid 2 (Correa 23, 63).

Barcelona 4 (Pique 19, Braithwaite 45+2, 59, Roberto 90+1) bt Real Sociedad 2 (Lobete Cienfuegos 82, Oiarzabal 85); Sevilla 3 (En-Nesyri 19pen, Lamela 55, 79) bt Rayo Vallecano O.

Bundesliga: Cologne 3 (Modeste 41, Kainz 52, 55) bt Hertha Berlin 1 (Jovetic 6).

Premier League: Tottenham 1 (Son 55) bt Man City O.

Courtois extends Real contract



Courtois. • REUTERS

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Belgian international goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois, who had been under contract until 2024, has extended his stay at Real Madrid until June 30, 2026, Madrid club announced on Monday.

Courtois, 29, has been with Real since 2018 when he arrived from Chelsea in a 35 million euro transfer. Prior to his spell in London, he played for Atletico Madrid between 2011 and

Games not to have spectators

Possibility of some children attending a few events

PARALYMPICS

ASSOCIATED PRESS

All fans will be barred from the Paralympics in Japan because of the coronavirus pandemic, just as they were from the recently-completed Tokyo Olympics, organisers said Monday.

There were a few exceptions made during the Olympics with some fans allowed in outlying areas away from Tokyo.

This time, all fans will be barred except the possibility of some children attending a few unspecified events. Organisers have also asked the public not to come out to view road events. The decision was an-

nounced after a meeting with International Paralympic Committee president Andrew Parsons, organising committee president Seiko Hashimoto, Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike and Olympic Minister Tamayo Marukawa.

The Paralympics opens on August 24 with about 4,400 athletes, a far smaller event than the Olympics with 11,000 athletes.



Click time: A Tokyo resident takes a selfie against the backdrop of the Paralympics countdown clock. • GETTY IMAGES

But the Paralympics come as new infections have accelerated in Tokyo, which may expose an athlete population that is more vulnerable to COVID-19.

No complacency

Parsons, speaking at a news conference, said there was no room for complacency in the wake of the Olympics.

"In light of the current case numbers in Tokyo and wider Japan, everyone attending these games must be vigilant," Parsons said.

New infections in Tokyo tripled during the 17 days of the Olympics, although medical experts said the surge was not directly linked the Tokyo Games.

Rather, experts suggested an indirect effect as the public was distracted and lulled into a false sense of security that staging the Games offered.

With the situation growing worse, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga on Monday said a state of emergency in Tokyo and other areas will be extended until Sept. 12. The state of emergency has been in force since July 12 and was to end later this month. The Paralympics end on Sept. 5.

Djokovic clocks 334 weeks at No. 1

Medvedev remains at No. 2



Staying put: Djokovic is firmly entrenched at the top of the ATP ranking list. • REUTERS

ATP RANKINGS

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Novak Djokovic, who has won three Majors this year and has his eyes firmly set on completing the Grand Slam with success at the U.S. Open, remains comfortably at No.1 in the ATP rankings, released on Monday.

The Serb has now spent a record 334 weeks in top spot, well ahead of next-best Roger Federer, who managed 310 and is now down at No. 9 and faces several months out of action while he undergoes knee surgery.

Federer's future

Federer said on Sunday he "will be out for many months", a decision which casts further doubt on his future in tennis at the age of

"I will be on crutches for many weeks and out of the game for many months," 20time Grand Slam title winner Federer said in a video

Casper Ruud continues to knock on the door of the Top 10, moving up one

posted on his Instagram account.

Daniil Medvedev remains at No. 2 after his victory in Toronto on Sunday while the man he beat in the final, the American Reilly Opelka, climbed nine places to 23.

Norwegian Casper Ruud

continues to knock on the door of the Top 10, moving up one place to 11, shadowed by Hubert Hurkacz, who beat Federer in the quarterfinals at Wimbledon. Top-20: 1. Novak Djokovic, 2. Daniil Medvedev, 3. Stefanos Tsitsipas, 4. Rafael Nadal 7,815, 5. Alexander Zverev, 6. Dominic Thiem. 7. Andrey Rubley, 8. Matteo Berrettini, 9, Roger Federer, 10. Denis Shapovalov, 11. Casper Ruud, 12. Hubert Hurkacz, 13. Pablo Carreno Busta, 14. Diego Schwartzman, 15. Jannik Sinner, 16. Roberto Bautista, 17. Felix Auger-Aliassime, 18. Alex De Minaur, 19. David Goffin, 20. Cristian Garín.

Bayern next up for in-form Haaland

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Bayern Munich is the next team to try to shackle Norwegian goal-machine Erling Braut Haaland when the defending Bundesliga champion faces Borussia Dortmund for the German Super Cup on Tuesday.

Under new coach Julian Nagelsmann, Bayern is bidding to win a 10th straight Bundesliga title, but was held to a 1-1 draw at Monchengladbach last Friday on the season's opening weekend.

Dortmund threw down a marker before the one-off German Super Cup match by beating Frankfurt 5-2 at home on Saturday with Haaland involved in all of the hosts' five goals.

Phenomenal scoring

only turned 21 last month, has now scored a phenomenal 62 times in 61 games for Dortmund. "Haaland is the complete package, that has to be said. We need him," said Dortmund captain Marco Reus.

Haaland has already scored five goals in his first two games this season.

A hat-trick in the German Cup was followed up by a stunning display in the Bundesliga as he tore into the Frankfurt defence, scoring twice and creating goals for Reus, Thorgan Hazard and Giovanni Reyna.

Haaland revelled in creating space for his teammates, then showed clinical finishing for the chances which came his way.

Nuno impatient for transfer window to shut

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Harry Kane is in Tottenham's squad for its Europa Conference League tie this week as manager Nuno Espirito Santo admits he cannot wait for the transfer window to close and end speculation over the striker's future.

Manchester City is keen to sign Kane and was reported to have tabled a bid of £100 million in June.

Kane - who has three years remaining on his contract – stayed away from Tottenham's 1-0 victory over City in its Premier League opener on Sunday.

However, The claims it is expected Kane will remain for one more season due to City's reluctance to meet Tottenham chairman Daniel Levy's reported asking price of £160 million.



The 28-year-old on Monday was named in Tottenham's squad for the Europa Conference League play-off against Pacos de Ferreira.

Nuno said he expected Kane to remain at the north London club, though he added he has enough experience to know Spurs should keep its options open regarding a move for a replacement.

Laporta paints a grim picture of Barcelona's finances

Blames previous administration for club's 'dramatic' situation

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Barcelona's president presented a grim picture of the club's financial situation on Monday, saying its debt had risen to €1.35 billion.

Joan Laporta blamed the previous administration of Josep Bartomeu for the club's "dramatic" situation that ultimately led to Lionel Messi's departure. Laporta accused Bartomeu of countless "lies" and said he and his board of directors must be held accountable.

losses of €481 million and was left with a negative net worth of €451 million, making it difficult to negotiate with players. "Our salaries represent

Laporta said the club had players' contracts."

103% of the club's total in-



Laporta. • AFP

come. That's 20% to 25% more than our competitors," Laporta said in a news conference. "We have found ourselves in a difficult situation to renegotiate the

The club lost star player Messi to PSG this month because it could not give him a

We have found ourselves in a difficult situation to

new contract that would fit within the league's strict financial fair-play regulations.

The club's debt included almost €390 million related to player salaries, Laporta said. More than €670 million was debts with banks, while some €40 million was linked to membership losses.

Gerard Pique said on Sunday he had to take a salary reduction so the club could register some of its new players and that other veteran players such as Sergio Busquets, Jordi Alba and Sergi Roberto were expected to do the same.

into semifinals

Balian, Deepak move

Three Indians bow out of junior Worlds

WRESTLING

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA UFA (RUSSIA)

Gourav Balian (79kg) and Deepak (97kg) entered the semifinals of the junior World wrestling championship, but three other Indians suffered defeats here on

Monday. Baliyan, who had attempted to stake his claim in the senior Indian team in the 74kg trials last year, beat his rivals without any fuss.

He began by defeating Tajikistan's Abubakr Shukurov by technical superiority as his two four-point throws stood out. Baliyan then got past Russia's Alik Badtiev 5-2 in the quarterfinals.

He is now up against Iran's Mohammad Ashghar

Nokhodilarimi, who had won the senior title at the Yasar Dogu event in June Deepak opened his cam-

paign with a 5-1 win over

Aliaksei Parkhomenka from

Belarus and followed that

up with a commanding 9-4 victory against Georgia's Luka Khutchua. He will fight it out against America's Braxton James Amos, who has switched to

freestyle Greco-Roman. In the 57kg competition, Shubham was no match for Russia's Ramazan Bagavudinov, whose superior techni-

Jaideep (70kg) and Rohit (65kg) won their opening bouts but later lost in the quarterfinals to Russians.

cal acumen was on display

in the quarterfinal bout.